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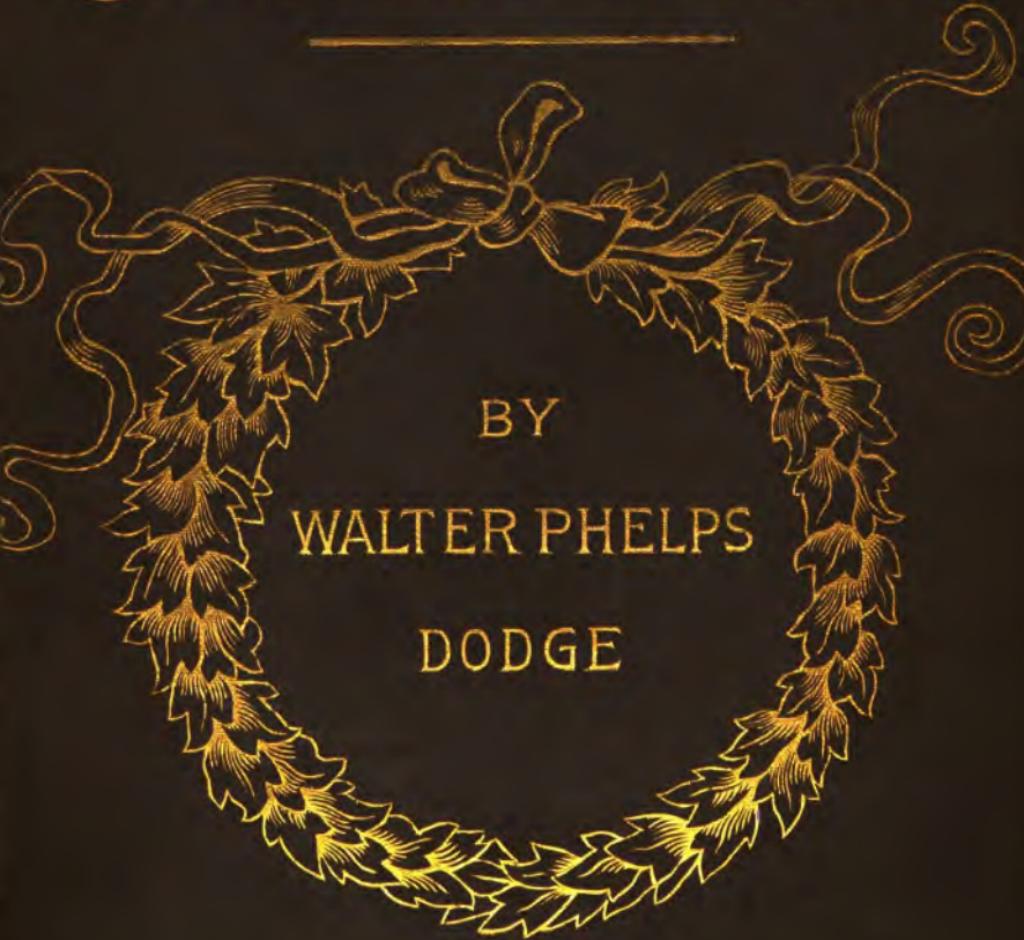
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GREEK TALES



BY

WALTER PHELPS

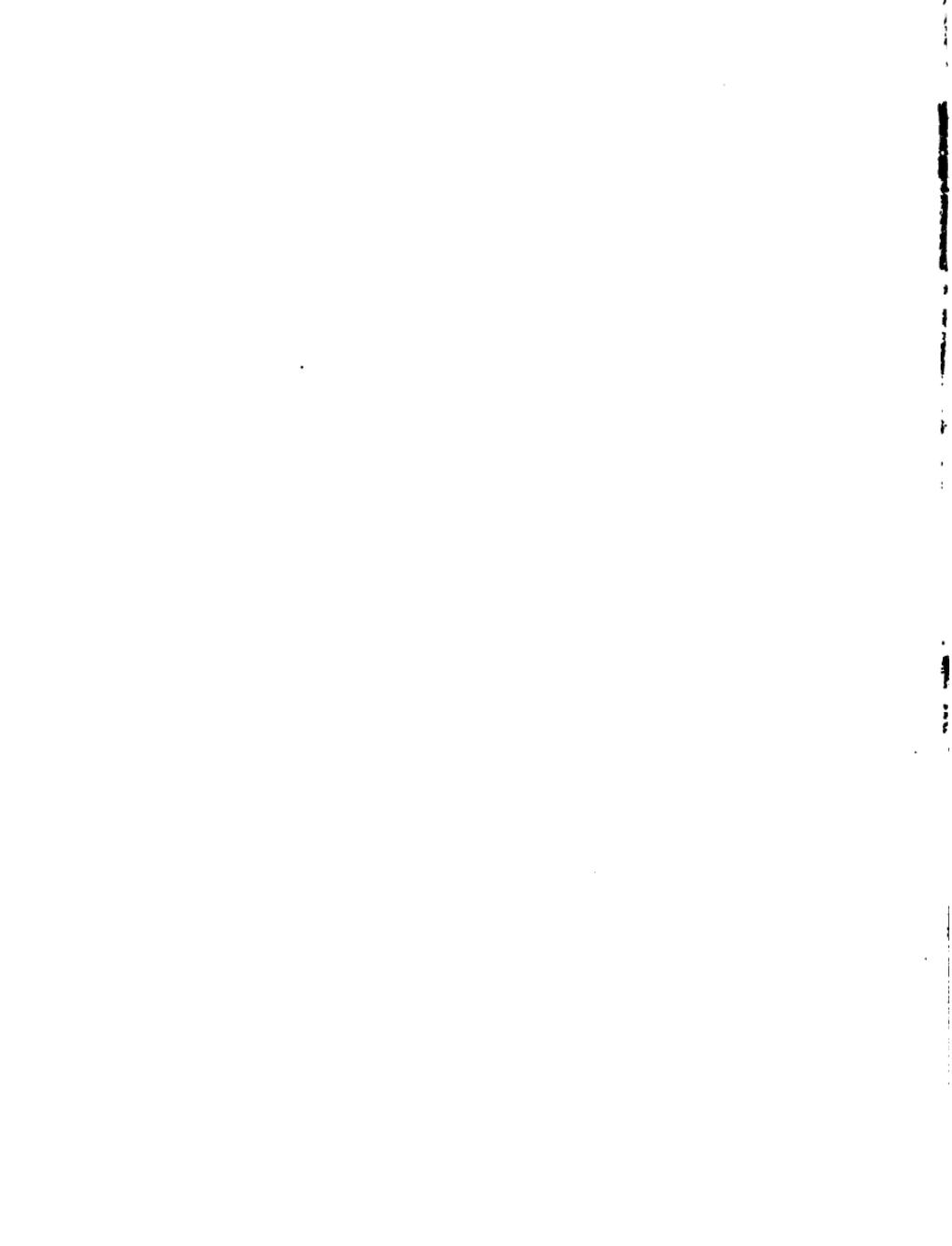
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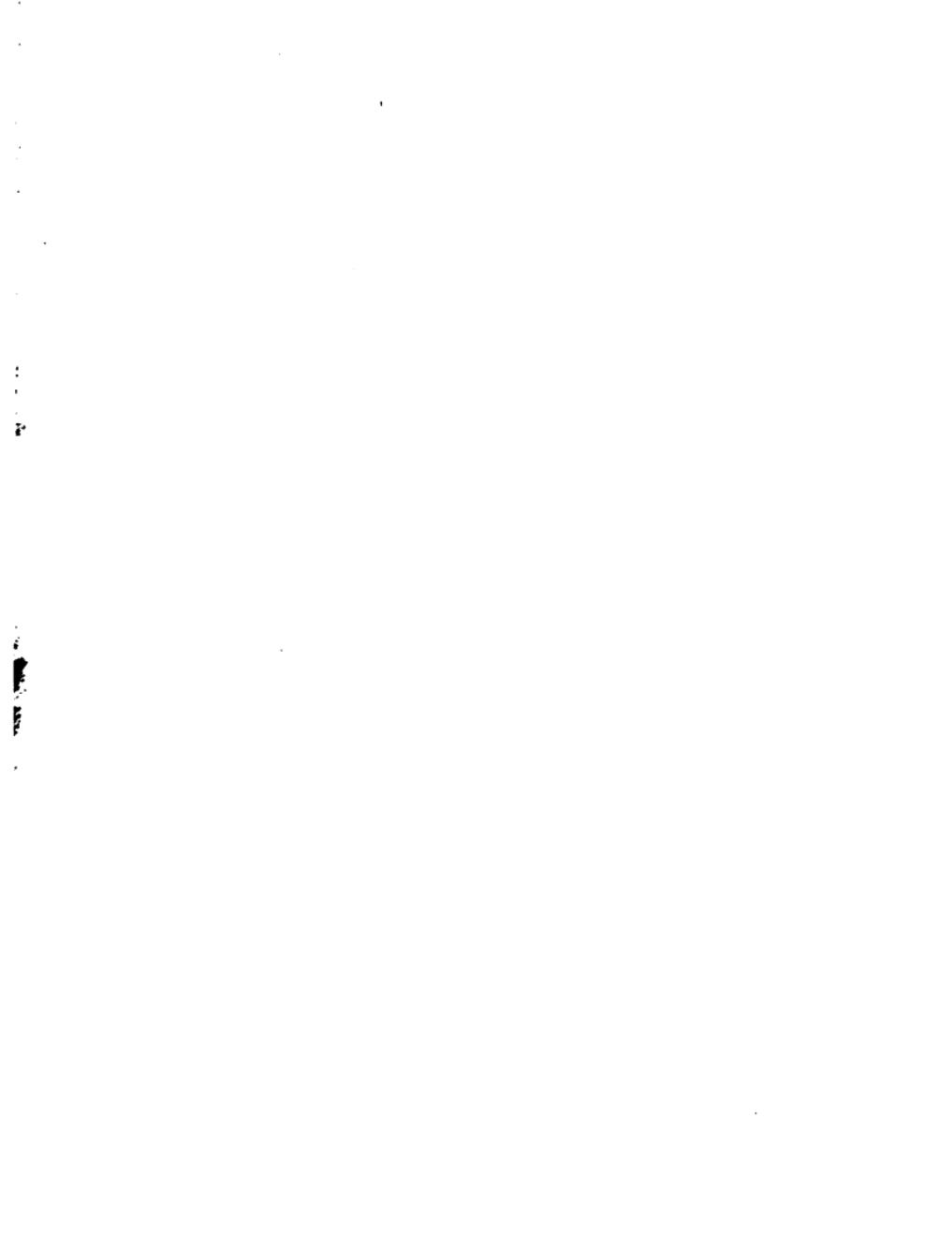


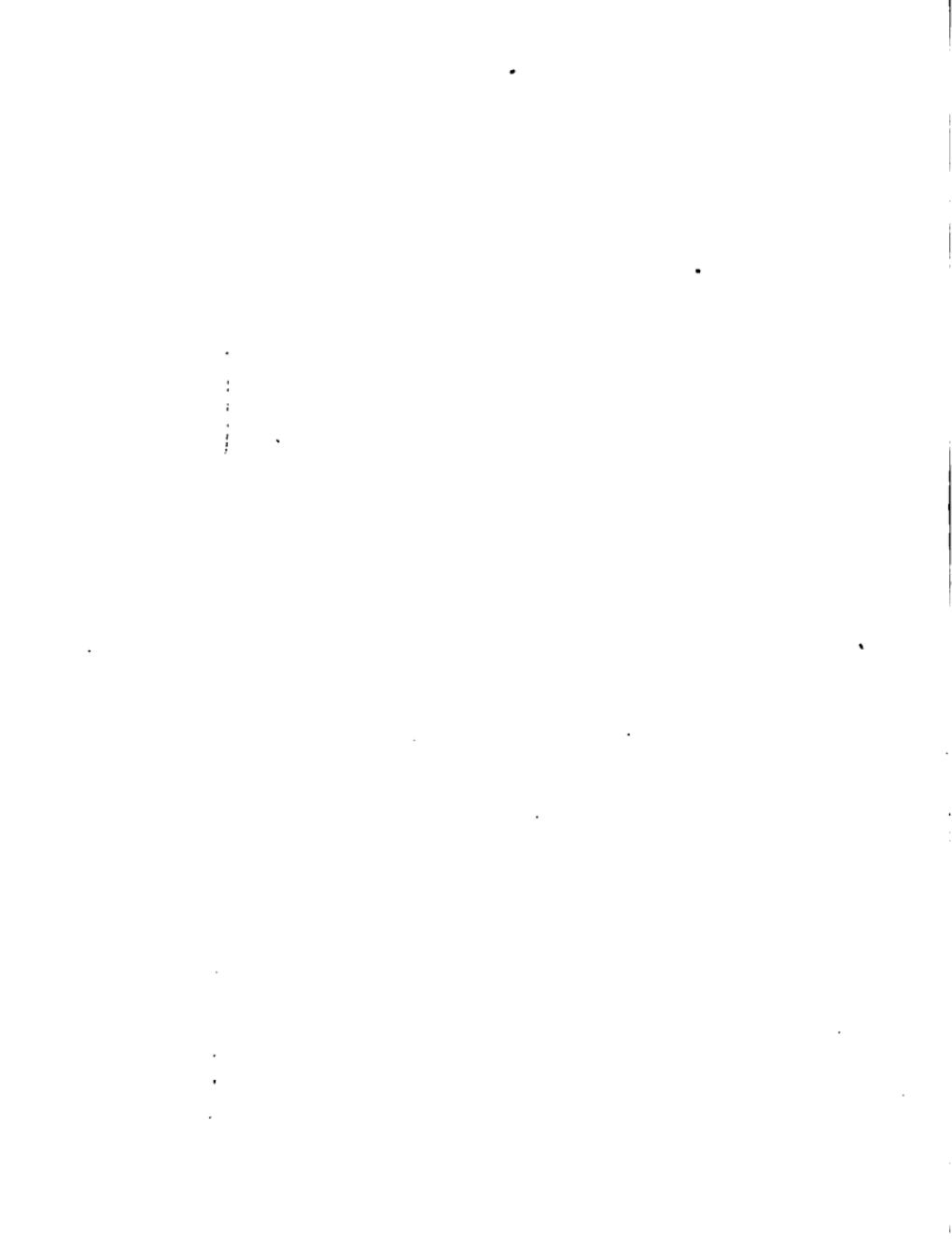
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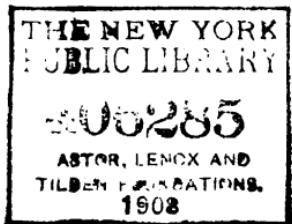
THREE GREEK TALES.

BY

WALTER PHELPS DODGE.

NEW YORK:
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1893.





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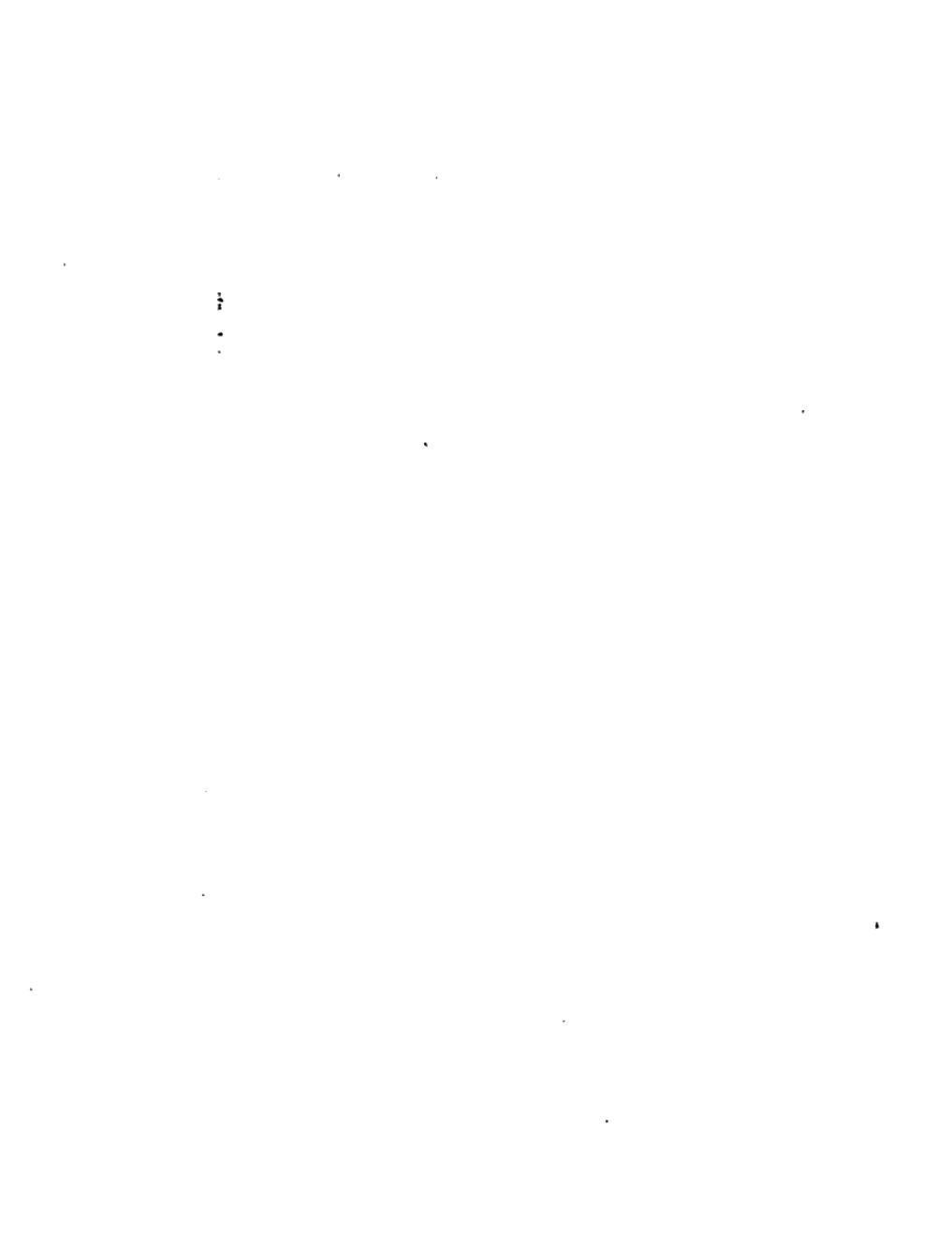
NEW YORK.

1892.

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of the HARTFORD POST, in the pages of
which these tales originally appeared.*



TO THE MEMORY OF E. P. D.



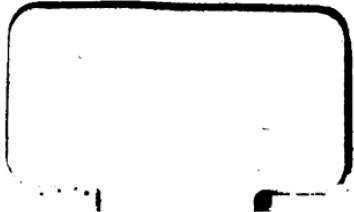
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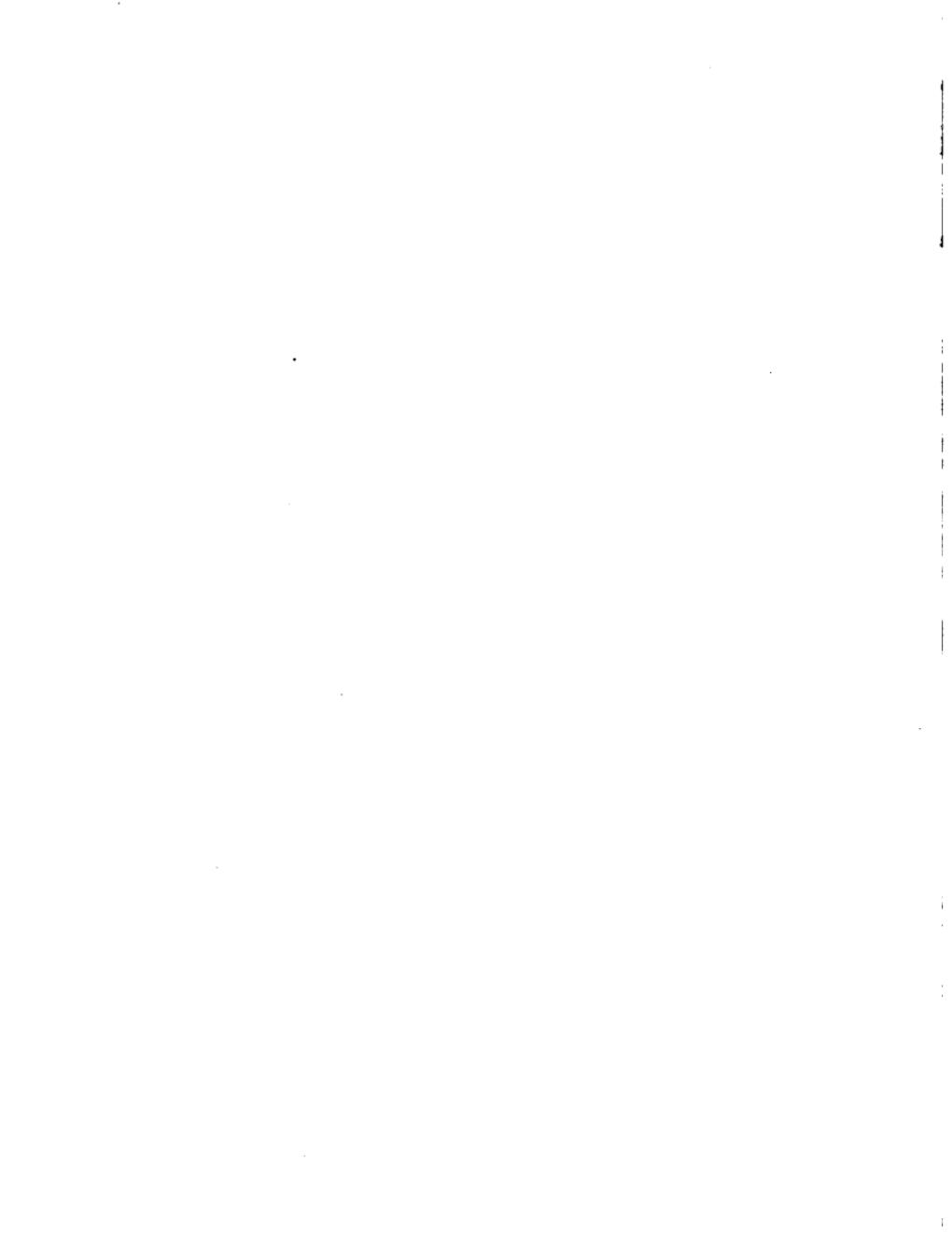
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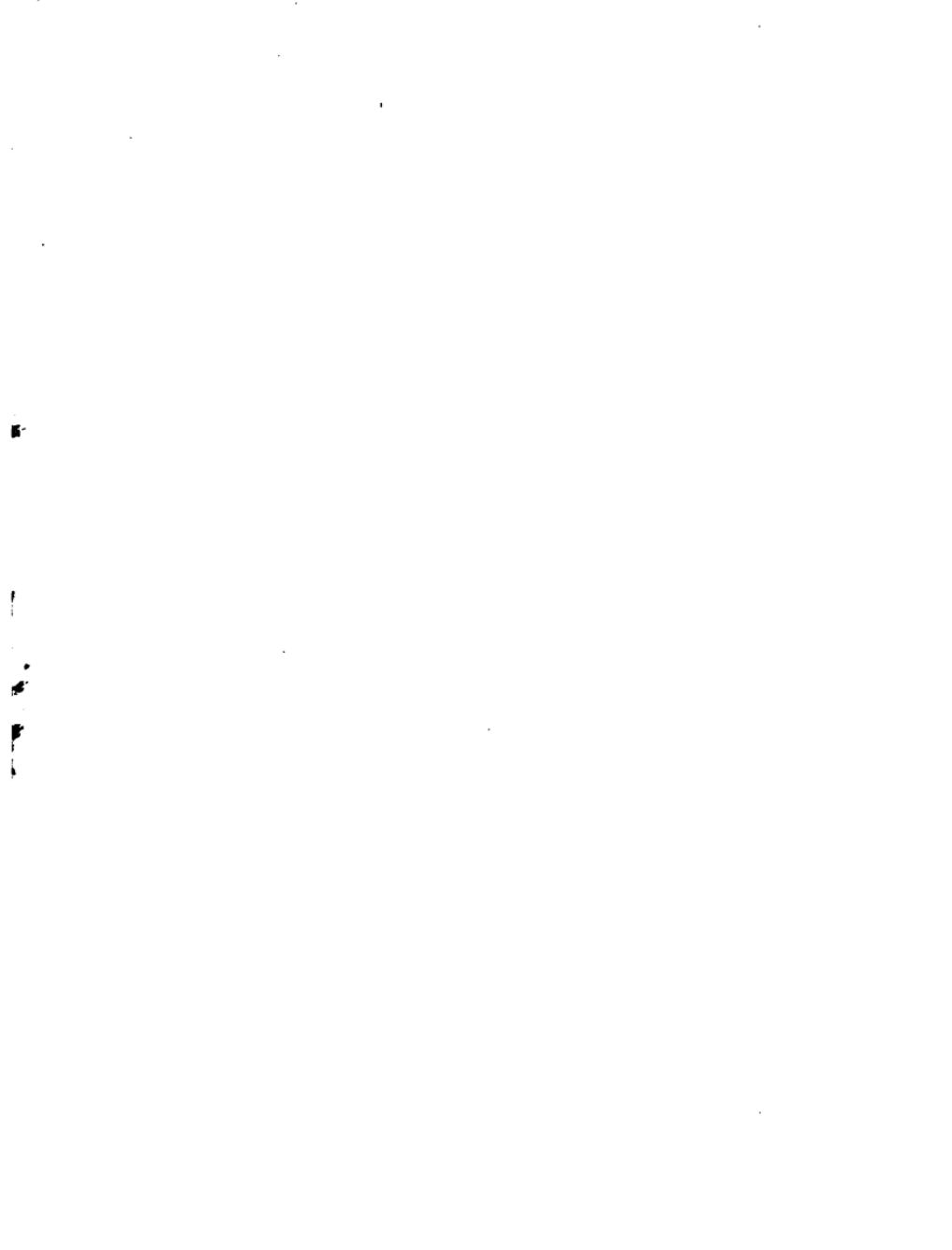


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on our way to the artistic Heaven, Olympia, to see the Hermes of Praxiteles—perhaps the most beautiful figure in the world, not excepting the Apollo Belvedere. Angelica had been looking forward to the trip for months, and her weary, anxious longing to see the Hermes was pathetic to the last degree.

When we reached the valley she was standing, lost in thought, and evidently delighted with the scene. I fear the classic memories that should have thronged upon me in such a spot were lost in admiration of the fair Spanish-American before me; but as I turned slowly and reluctantly away, laden with rugs and baskets for our lodging up on the hill, I thought of old Milo of Crotona, who had staggered over this course, a bull on his shoulders, and wondered who and what he was in the days when Agamemnon ruled at Mycenae, and Helen was Queen of Sparta. I remember, too, a hot discussion with Angelica on our way up the furze-grown and boulder-covered hill, in which I appeared at a disadvantage, being warm and cross, while she, as ever, was provokingly cool and indifferent. We discussed the relative merits of

Greece and America as permanent places of residence; she favored America, I Greece, so all the way up the steep we argued; triumphantly, thought I, for my part, until we met the others, when I was at once undeceived by her saying, "Oh, mamma, dear, Fergus has been making a great goose of himself, as usual, but this time he has given in."

Too bewildered by this sudden attack to venture on a reply, I followed the others to our khan for the night. A lovely situation! On the cliffs above the valley, where, gleaming white in the twilight, the columns and pillars of the temple of Zeus lay or stood in beautiful confusion; and a thin gray thread in the distance showed the course of the river, sung by poets generations ago. But the khan! Originally in its untidiness, Greek, and but lately vacated by Germans! With sinking hearts we entered and gazed around. The two regulation rooms of the Greek peasant, in this case fortunately somewhat raised above the ground, were before us. One, large and ill-smelling, kitchen, bed-room, dining-room and cellar thrown together, we

hardy males occupied (anticipatory gleams of trouble in our eyes as we gazed upon our couches); the second, small and close, the "spare room" of the place, Angelica, her mother and sister endured. Then the usual babel began, the shouts of the porters dissatisfied with their fees, the curses of our Albanian escort, ordering them to begone, the bleating of the lamb destined for our supper, the protestations of the landlady swearing to Angelica's mother that the sheets were as clean and sweet as a baby after a bath, the steady monotone of the professor as he read Murray's account of the discovery of the Hermes, and the wail of the wind, literally sighing through the roof, formed one harmonious whole, and a memorable introduction of the delights of Olympia. But soon came a lull, and supper; after we had completed our toilets on the small verandah, to the intense delight of all the small Constantines, Marikas, Vassoulis and Irenes below. As a special treat to-night we added beer to our usual dessert of chocolate and biscuits, and discussed these, with various other topics of interest as we sat outside in the glow of the

setting sun. Of course, as Angelica was present, we talked most of the Hermes; for months she had talked and sighed and longed for Olympia, for months declared her scorn of a world where no longer such a type as the Hermes existed, and for months she had reiterated her desire to embrace the masterpiece of Praxiteles, and then die.

Thoughts, sad and curious, pressed on me as I listened to her cold, pure voice; wonder if after all she was human, fear lest some spice of truth should linger in that old legend which claims that a statue is recalled to life at a pure maiden's kiss; and at length jealousy of the cold marble and of her wild unreasoning love for it.

I moved impatiently to the doorway, then turned and stood a minute in silent enjoyment of the picture. Our couches—'twere base flattery to call them beds—were ranged around the room, and, on their far from snowy whiteness, rested and reclined in various picturesque positions the different members of our party. Venerable and serene looked the Senator as he carelessly turned the leaves of the "Duchess's" latest effort; scholarly and handsome Professor Cushing,

as he wrote his absent wife; matronly and sweet Angelica's mother, as she mended a rent in wild little Marie's scarlet frock. A pretty picture—Marie and my tall, sensible brother, Frank, their heads together over one volume of the "Water Babies," in a distant corner. And Angelica, where was she? Standing at the window, and gazing, with all her soul in her eyes, over the fast-darkening valley crowded with the spirits of departed Argives and vanished Athenians.

We retired early in those days, from necessity rather than choice, as the only lamps were bunches of rags dipped in olive oil and exhaling a strong odor, not of Araby the blest; so when Angelica made the move, her mother and Marie followed with suspicious haste, their action suggesting to an observant mind that they had merely been waiting an opportune moment to retreat. Once gone, a greater latitude was permitted, and after enjoying our fragrant cigarettes from Thessaly, we retired, not, alas, in the ordinary sense of the word, but only to court forgetfulness on the outside of our beds, no one of us having the courage to penetrate their mysterious interior.

A morning tub in Greece! Who can describe it? Who paint the unmitigated awe and delight depicted upon the faces of some half-hundred little fiends of either sex, as you vigorously apply the (to them) mysterious cake of Pears. It is simply impossible to secure privacy for one's toilet in Greece, and at last we gave in, content to tub on the verandah, in the cellar, or anywhere, so long as the precious privilege was allowed us!

We were a merry set at breakfast that morning, most of us too impatient to eat, although some of us did our best in that line. I still remember Angelica's scorn as I asked for a second help of lamb, "You can eat, actually eat, when you know you will see the Hermes to-day!" And the penciled eyebrows slightly lifted as she pushed away her own plate. "Ah, well, I have read of the transmigration of souls, but I never realized the possibilities of the theory before." With this thrust she rose, and went to get ready for the—to her—supreme moment of her life.

Angelica always designed her own frocks, and this one was a triumph in its way; scarlet and

black were the colors, and an officer's sash, carried by her father through many fierce battles of the Civil War, confined it at the waist, and dragged the ground as she walked. Slowly we wandered down the hill, breathing in the clear air, and deriving added enjoyment from the reflection that thousands of perfumed women and jeweled warriors—for then men could wear precious stones as well as women—had breathed it in before us, and that, if a German theory were true, we were breathing in their essence, that which had gone to make them what they were; inasmuch as we were where they had been, and of necessity they had left part behind. The Germans have built (and paid for) a museum in Olympia, a long, low, irregular, but charming building, containing some of the most valuable of Greek sculptures, and, rarest and most wonderful of all, the Hermes of Praxiteles. Few tourists come up from the sea to this little hamlet hidden in the mountains, for the way is long and dreary, and many discomforts are to be undergone; so we idled through the long halls lined on each side with bits of the frieze belong-

ing to the temple of Zeus, and gigantic arms and legs, pertaining to an immense statue of Heracles, with a comfortable sense that henceforth we should be enrolled among the select few who had visited Olympia and seen the Hermes.

Angelica was very pale as she approached the room containing the statue, and as her father pushed aside the curtain in the doorway, she caught her breath with a gasp. But my thoughts and fears were forgotten when the statue in all its lovely manliness was before me, beautiful and warm, as if just aroused from sleep, one arm outstretched, the other supporting the infant Dionysus, and an eternal loving smile on the sweet lips. No suggestion of marble or sculptor was here. The strong personality of the figure was nearly human, and one could almost catch the play of the features as a ray of sunlight darted over the lovely face. Roused from my fancies I turned to Angelica. She was a perfect picture, as with clasped hands and intent face she looked up at the smiling god. A wealth of warm affection was in her eyes, as she

gazed, and I no longer wondered at Galatea. As I watched she seemed to grow slighter and paler, and I rubbed my eyes, as though half expecting to see her fade away and become merged in Vishnu the Pervader, as the Brahmins say.

But she still remained, and for another hour we stayed, drinking in the beautiful, until finally exhausted nature rebelled, and although still worshipping, we realized that we were distinctly hungry. Angelica scornfully refused to go back to the khan for lunch, and so we left her at the foot of the statue still adoring the Hermes. Two hours later when we returned it was still the same. Her mother had objected to her waiting there so long alone, but the Senator, after the manner of his sex, was contemptuous, saying: "All girls pass through such nonsense, and we may be grateful Angelica has lavished her affection on a statue."

So it went on for a week; every day alone, Angelica sought the Hermes, and adored him from afar, breaking, as well as she could, poor child, the Second Commandment.

II.

We ceased to worry about her at length, although we spoke tenderly of her as of one suffering, but I often stole to the Hermes room and saw she was comfortable before we started on our numerous excursions up and down the pleasant valley. Greek writers claim Olympia as the original Eden, and one can easily credit them, for it would be hard to find a lovelier spot. The intense blue of the sky, the sweetness, almost sugary, of the air, and the marble ruins gleaming white and still against the sky, form a charming picture, not marred by the occasional appearance of a peasant in all the glory of his fustanella; white kilted, his dark face surmounted by a golden-tasseled fez, lower, larger, richer than the Ottoman abomination, and with a keen silver-hafted knife stuck in his Russia leather belt. They put most of their wealth on their person, these Greek peasants, and the veriest boor is like a hero from Salvator Rosa's canvas.

But Angelica was growing pale and thin; great dark circles were under her eyes, and her mother

insisted on her immediate removal from the influence of the statue. We consented after much discussion, for we had all fallen in love with the dreamy hero-haunted valley ; and they sent me to tell Angelica. I found her, as usual, on her knees before the god, gazing; always with that intent drawn look, at his smiling lovely face. She looked at me when I had finished, and whispered in a strange, low voice : "Don't you know my life is bound up with the Hermes, and I shall die if I leave him ?" And again she sank down on the cushion, the wild, anxious light once more in her eyes. With a sigh I left her, for she was already unconscious of my presence; and returned to the khan to make some last arrangements.

The time flew swiftly, and the last evening came, for on the morrow we were to leave Olympia, with all its memories: its clear sky, its flower-carpeted stretches, and simple, beautiful peasants with their strange and pleasing dress. And yet no one of us were sorry, for we all wondered at the effect on Angelica, and dread was mingled with our wonder; for we well knew the sensitive

spirit and proud will of the "flower maiden," as we sometimes called her.

She had announced her intention of going down alone, the last thing at night, to look her last on the Hermes, and strictly forbade any of us to accompany or sit up for her. Her mother was disinclined to grant permission, but she consented, won by her daughter's tearful pleadings, on condition that she would return within two hours. I stood on the cliffs and watched her as she went. The misty light cast on the scene by the moon, yet hardly a week old, gave a ghostly tinge to all things and caused the slight figure making its way down the hill, to look like a wraith shrouded in clouds of fog or mist.

In spite of her warning I determined to wait on the cliffs until I saw her returning, and then retire with my conscience at rest. It was about ten when she was finally lost in the shadows below, and choosing a moderately comfortable seat on the rocks commanding a view of the path I fell to musing on the scene before me. I peopled the silent temples with white-clad priests who poured libations to Zeus, the Thunderer,

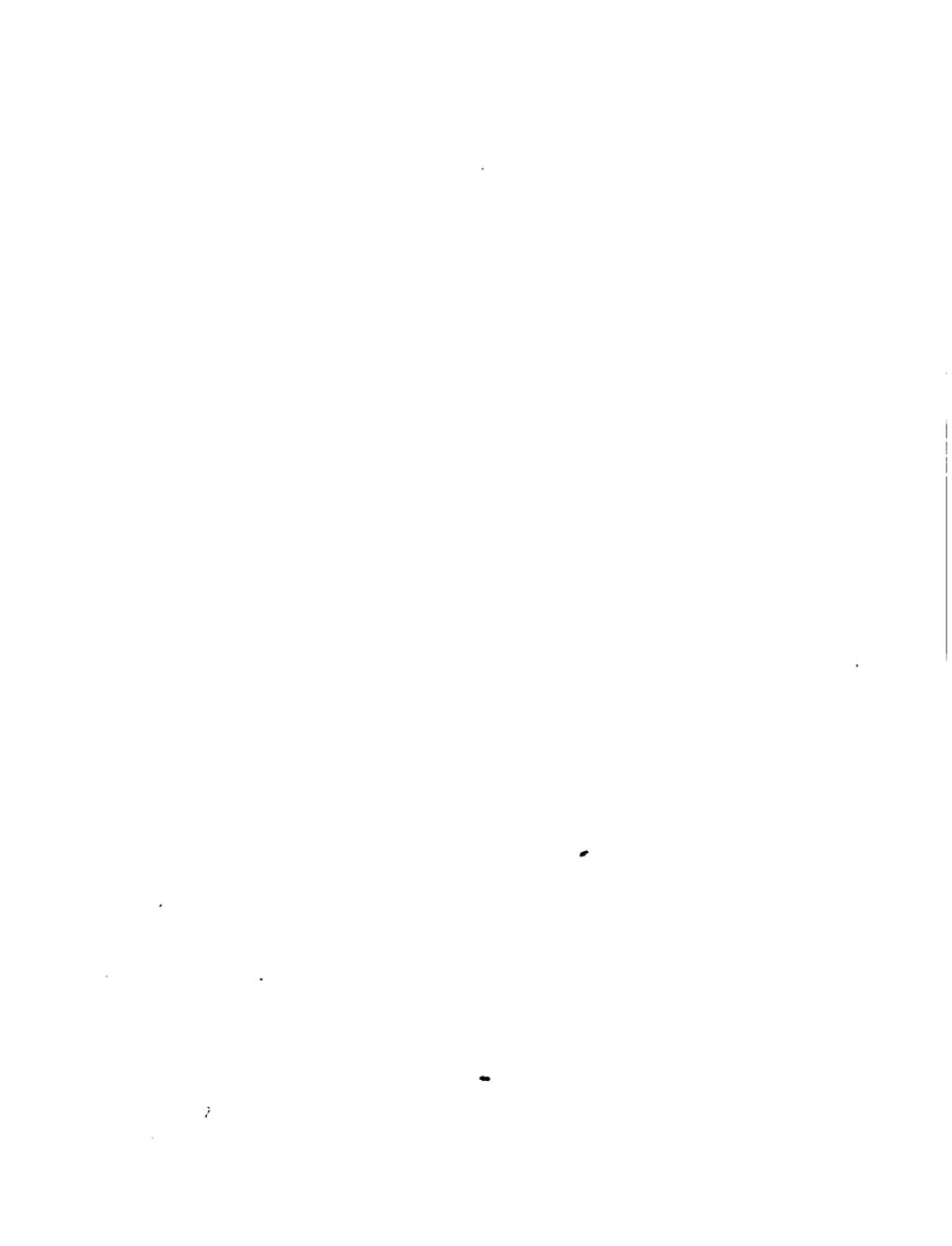
and offered sacrifices before the blue-eyed Athene. I saw the athletes contending in the course below me, saw the runners anoint their limbs and throw themselves into position for the start; and, while waiting for the signal, fell fast asleep, my head resting against the bare rock, and my feet hanging in space. I must have slept for hours, for when I woke it was early morning; dull gleams of light were struggling through the clouds, and the "rosy five-fingered Aurora" was swiftly coming. Half dazed I stared around, and felt ashamed as I thought that Angelica must have seen me, as she passed that way on her return. But a glance at the khan above me banished all thoughts, but those of fear, for the door stood open, and the rag-lamp still burned in the chair in the doorway, to guide the wanderer up the hill. I hastily snatched out my watch, and found that it was half-past four. Had that delicate girl passed the night alone in that dark, damp hall, with no protector but the Hermes? With hasty curses on my drowsy propensities, I scrambled as best I might, down the rocky hill. In the path or out of it, over

sunken fences—huge boulders—crashing through bushes, stumbling into water holes, I hurried, my progress not a little hastened by the fact that I had stepped on a sleeping dog, who was making vigorous efforts to avenge the slight to his feelings, just a little way behind me. Into the museum I dashed, then suddenly stopped, arrested by a dread of what the next room might contain. With a beating heart I stole forward and softly opened the door : Angelica had evidently tired of worshipping the statue from below, and wishing to carry her cherished plan into execution, had climbed to the feet of the Hermes, which was suspended from the ceiling by iron chains around the waist, about six feet from the ground—and then by clasping its knees, had managed to secure a foothold on the iron beams surrounding it, while she supported herself by clinging closely to it. Soon wearying of this position, she tried to descend, when, to her dismay, she found her sash and dress entangled with the chains near the waist of the statue, and unable to loose herself, it was only by great efforts she prevented herself from swinging in the air. How the poor

child must have suffered as the cruel hours went by, as the moonlight faded into darkness, which in its turn gave place to gray dawn ! Tired out at length by fatigue, fright and loneliness, she fell asleep, or rather into a sort of doze, during which she was sure the Hermes smiled on her, and eased her painful position ; and all the air around seemed peopled with faces, strange, yet familiar. Surely Hermes had not summoned the goddesses from Olympus to see the poor little stranger, and yet Angelica saw them all, and tells how the stately Hera floated by, regarding her with scornful eyes, how Tritonia wrapped in a cold, white mist had watched her indifferently, and how kindly Aphrodite smoothed back her hair with a murmured assurance of safety and good will.

Then in a long, solemn march she saw the heroes of the past, and all, with their sightless eyes, smiled on her as they went by. Armies filed before her, strange and terrible, men in Turkish dress, Venetian sailors, and after a long time, a soldier, alone, wounded, with a look of such beauty and power, that it did not require

the crest of the Greek republic on his shoulder, to show that Capo d' Istria was before her. All this she told me afterwards, but I only saw a slender, girlish figure in scarlet and black, clasping the marble god, her brown-tressed head against his shoulder, traces of tears on her pale cheeks, and such a peaceful happy look on her face, that I hardly dared disturb her; and as I came slowly forward in the dim uncertain light, I fancied I saw a frown on the marble features. She started when I called her, and let me take her down without a word. She looked long at the statue when we reached the door and a shudder shook her cruelly. Then she turned and silently went up the hill, and without a word threw herself into her mother's arms. We left Olympia that day.



MARIKA.

AN EPISODE OF ATHENS.

I.

WE had had a long, dull rainy day, and I was tired; so as I lay back in my easy chair and stared at the Beatrice Cenci on the wall, I felt a sleepy feeling gradually stealing upon me, and was preparing to woo the drowsy god, when the door flew open and my sister Edie dashed in, her curls flying behind her, and coming up to me, began to pour out her story : "Oh, Fergus, dear, we're going to have such a jolly time if you'll only come, and mamma says Dolly and I may go, if you'll take us. You will, won't you, Fergus ?" Rather bewildered, I asked where she wanted me to take them, and if it were a thing of pressing importance. "Of course you must come, Fergus dear ; I know you'll en-

joy it as much as any of us. Do go and get ready. You are so slow."

"But where, Edie?" I remonstrated, as she began pushing me toward the door.

"Why, to Annette's cousin's wedding, of course, you stupid boy. We told you all about it this morning, and Annette's ready waiting for us. She's got a new cap, all bows and strings. Be sure to bring a purse, Fergus, for Mr. Xenos says all the guests drop a gold piece before the bride. There, now, you know all about it; do come on! You know mamma doesn't think it good form for us to walk on Hermes street without an escort, so make haste," and with a coaxing smile she hurried away.

We had been spending the winter in Athens, and I had seen many characteristic customs, but somehow I had always missed a genuine Greek wedding, and I was delighted with this opportunity of seeing one; so I hastily changed my boots for a stouter pair and strolled over to the window to wait for my sisters.

My study commanded a superb view of the Parthenon, for our house was near the palace,

facing the Acropolis. To-night the sky was free from clouds, and in the west a deep crimson glow lingered, which glanced on each huge pillar of the ruined temple of Zeus, until they stood out strongly against the darkening sky.

I did not look forward with unmixed pleasure to the evening before me, for I knew what to expect: a crush of people in small rooms, a pot-pourri of sickly sweets one would feel obliged to accept or mortally offend one's hosts, and a long harangue from an elderly priest in a vile *patois* of modern Greek and Maltese-Italian—all this with the thermometer at eighty degrees! But still I wanted to see the wedding proper, and was sure of meeting some pretty girls, so I greeted my sisters with a good grace. They made a pretty picture as they stood in the wide doorway; two tall, slim, young things in cool, white muslin, just budding into maidenhood, and passing into the wondering age; with rosy cheeks and such pretty pursed-up lips that they were forever being kissed by some of us;—their arms about each others' waists, and their yellow hair and blue sashes mingling in confusion.

Once started, we strolled slowly across the square to Stadion street, Annette leading the way, her purple cap-strings streaming in the breeze. It was six o'clock, and the streets were filled with small tables, covered with glasses of mastic—the Greek substitute for brandy, and to the taste of an Englishman strongly impregnated with liquid turpentine—and eau-sucrée; extending from the doors of the cafés down to the curbstone. The tables were surrounded with men discussing fiercely and with violent gestures the policy of the Premier, and all certain that before long King George would occupy the palace of the Sultan, and that the Greek flag would again wave over the clear waters of the Bosphorus. At length we turned down the "Street of Lykabettus," and Annette had little need to turn and say "*Voilà enfin M'sieu,*" for the doleful sound of the tom-tom came from a large house on our right, through the door of which a crowd of kilted mountaineers were passing.

"See, Dolly," I said, "this begins to look interesting. Instead of an ordinary Greek wedding which we have all seen, we are evidently to

assist at one of the old ceremonies, for these kilted fellows would never attend the marriage of anyone not of their own blood ; and Annette says this is something not seen every day." She shrunk closer to me, but Edie, the bolder of the the two, pushed on in. Just inside the door we stood aside to give a new batch of the mountaineers room, and watched them all pass in—tall, swarthy fellows, who, in their white kilts, stiffly starched, and with their immaculately-covered legs, reminded me forcibly of the ballet. But their set, sullen faces and the treacherous gleam of their blue eyes were a strange contrast to the gay smiles and naughty looks of the Gaiety Danseuses.

It is a curious fact that no one has ever seen an Albanian mountaineer who has not blue eyes—not the pale blue eye of the Holsteiner, or the darker, warmer blue eye of the Briton—but a hard, steely, greenish-blue eye that is never still. I am indebted to Edie in part for these original observations, delivered to me early next morning from her room, next to mine, and punctuated by the splashes that usually

accompany that indispensable operation known as taking a tub.

After the last Albanian had solemnly stalked in, Annette came up to us with an old woman, evidently the hostess.

“Welcome Kyrie and the little ladies, too,” said she.

“Surely my house is honoured this day; but come in if it please thee, honourable folk, and know that my house and all that it contains are thine to-night.”

Making a suitable return to the dame’s welcome, and whispering to Edie not to laugh, we went in; my sisters clinging to me now, for the Albanians were seated in a circle about the room, each one gazing into space, and grasping the silver-hafted knife in his belt. The women were still upstairs, helping to dress the bride, but we were reminded of their presence by a gale of laughter every now and then borne from above.

When we were fairly inside every one rose, and the bridegroom, with the priest (or papa, as he is called) in charge, came forward to welcome

us. He was a tall, young fellow, straight as a willow wand ; and in his white kilts and gold-powdered Zouave jacket, with his richly-embroidered sash, he presented a brilliant appearance, while his red fez set off his dark face to perfection.

I rather think Dolly fell in love with him at first sight, for the little coquette dropped her fan and looked appealingly at him. He smiled, and stooping to reach the fan, handed it to her with a graceful bow and then kissed her hand. Dolly blushed, but rather fancied herself for the rest of the evening, I think.

Then we took our seats, first bowing to the bride who now swept in, attended by four girls. We politely declined the rose-leaf jam passed about in a wide old Greek vase, dug presumably from one of the innumerable graves near Athens. The sweetmeat was delicious, but, alas, there was only one spoon, and with this the assembled guests had already made free ; so with regretful looks we watched the dainty preserve disappear. Our chairs were at the head of three communicating rooms, near the bride's seat of honour, and

we had plenty of time to look about us, before, as Dolly said, "the pantomime began."

Through the rooms a bright mass of colour was moving and heaving, and a subdued murmur of chatter and laughter rose on the incense-laden air. Occasionally a girl guest, in a long, white robe fitted tightly to her figure and showing every wind and curve, would move in our direction, and cast glances of curiosity at the "Inglesi," while we admired the collection of gold coins about her neck, and on her lavishly-displayed bosom—heirlooms from some ancestor—and valued as much for their associations as their intrinsic worth. There were many types in the room and one might see a shepherd from Sparta, tormented with thirst, go into the little anteroom, turn on the spigot of the barrel containing the fiery retzinato, and let the burning stream hiss down his throat; and then move away to lean against the wall, and lose himself in a calculation of how many of his neighbour's sheep he would carry off on his return, were he favored with a dark night. Our hostess claimed descent from Penelope of Ithaca, for she was proud of her

family, and her claim was not disputed by those who had dined at her heavy laden board, and who hoped to dine there again.

But the priests had come together and stood near the bride, who was a tall, pale young girl, gowned in some pure white stuff, which fell gracefully about her. And now we all rose, and put green wreaths on the heads of the happy pair and led them up to the chief papa before whom they reverently kneeled.

The service was not very impressive to my mind, for the old man confined himself to bowing and crossing his own reverend person, while smiling blandly at Edie and Dolly; every now and then changing the wreaths from the bride's head to the groom's, and back again. He then prayed for some minutes at a rapid rate, with eyes closed and hands outstretched, and changed the rings of the bride and groom twice, as he had changed the wreaths; while a snuffy boy, to whom both my sisters strongly objected, drawled out the interminable liturgy of the Greek church, and the assistant priests surreptitiously ate garlic. At length the cere-

mony was over, and we all advanced to salute the bride. I kissed her, and dropping a gold piece before her, was about to return to my seat when, directly behind her I caught sight of a shrinking graceful figure. Thinking her a bridesmaid, I offered, according to custom, to kiss her, too. Starting, she turned to me, and I saw her face. I shall never forget it. It was not classically beautiful, the features were perhaps hardly regular, but the mouth was perfect, the curved lips like a newly opened rose, and the delicate bloom of the cheeks so transparent that at the slightest alarm the blood flickered into them and tinged them a rare pale pink. Reluctantly, but with courtesy, she accepted my salute, and turning, glided away and disappeared. With my brain on fire I drew back to my seat, and unconscious of my sisters' chatter, sat with my eyes fixed on the doorway through which she had vanished. I passed my hand over my brow in amazement. Was I, Fergus Charlecote, a steady, easy-going, English barrister, who had scoffed at love and done my best to emulate Diogenes, fated to fall in love with a wild

Greek girl from the mountains at first sight, like a school boy? And I knew that I was in love, for every time I recalled that lovely startled face, my veins tingled, and I felt that I must see her again.

I was fast losing myself in a pleasing vision where I was already building a huge *Chateau en Espagne* when I felt my sleeve pulled, and looking around saw Dolly, who was tired of the conversation she had been carrying on with one of the youngest of the Albanians, in a mixed patois of French and Greek, and rather disgusted at the conduct of her cavalier, who was now nibbling daintily at a bulb of garlic, and thereby diffusing an aroma around him, to be appreciated only by connoisseurs. She looked frightened, and whispered to me: "Whatever is that dreadful Albanian scowling at you for? See, near the door."

I followed her gaze and started, for there, with the thick veins standing out on his forehead, his fingers working convulsively at the knife in his belt, and his whole appearance showing the most violent rage, was Hadji Mulak, the

young leader and feudal chief of the Albanians present. He looked straight at me, and evidently was restraining himself only by a great effort. But preparations now began to be made for the closing scenes of the wedding, and hurriedly speaking to my sisters we left the house, first saying good evening to the hostess and to the bride and groom. I was anxious to get my sisters away, for there are queer scenes at Greek weddings, even in these times, smacking more of the old Hellenic days than of modern refinement.

II.

The Albanian chief frowned and half drew his knife as we passed him, but I took no notice, and we went on undisturbed. My sisters chattered all the way back, but I paid small attention and when I had delivered them into the hands of their maids, and received a dozen kisses from each in payment of my escort, I hurried back to the scene of the wedding. I did not go in, but waited outside, and sent a message for Annette,

who had remained behind. I felt full confidence in her, for she had been my mother's maid for some time and was devoted to the family. She came finally, just as I reached the limit of my patience, and drawing her to a retired corner, I pushed a napoleon into her eager hand ; and first describing the Greek maiden I had seen, I told her I must meet her again. Annette recognized her by my description, but said she knew nothing of her except that she was the daughter of a mountain chief and was now on her first visit to Athens, staying with her old nurse, Kyria Pounditis ; and that she had condescended to act as bridesmaid for the sake of the daughter of her old servant. She went on :

“ Oh, M'sieu, it will be impossible to meet her again to-night. I could not arrange that, but I am not ungrateful, and will earn my napoleon. If M'sieu will wait here one moment, I may promise him a glimpse, through her window, of the room where the Kyria has retired ; but only a glimpse.”

I eagerly caught at the suggestion, oblivious of Mrs. Grundy and of the risk I ran ; and after

waiting a moment, I cautiously followed Annette, who led the way into a small back garden. Most Greek houses have their bedrooms on the ground floor, so Annette crept noiselessly forward, and having peeped through the shutterless window, withdrew smiling and beckoned me to take her place. How it all comes back to me now—the dark garden, the breeze sighing among the trees, the single gleam of light from the window, and the distant sound of the tom-toms ! As I saw my darling then, she will always remain with me : seated on the low bed, surrounded by her dainty garments, in graceful night *negligé*, her hand supporting her brow, and one little bare foot tapping the floor impatiently, a sad wistful look on her sweet face. I thought of Hadji Mulak and could hardly restrain myself ; but Annette touched me warningly and we went.

After we had reached the house I turned into the garden to smoke and think. What must I do to see the girl again ? For I was resolved to see her and win her too, so great an impression had she made upon my hitherto callous heart. If ever a man was wildly and passionately in

love I was, and I should be afraid to say how many miles I walked that night or how many cigars I smoked, trying in vain to compose my mind sufficiently for sleep. Suffice it to say the rosy dawn was tinging the sky in the east before I sought my restless bed.

With the sun an inspiration came to me—I would see Annette again. If anyone could help me it was she. Resolved to waste no time, I made a hasty toilet and went to the *salle-à-manger*, where she was usually to be found at that hour of the morning. She was there, arranging some fresh figs daintily on a silver salver for my mother's breakfast. In a few hasty words I told her my wish, that I must see the Greek girl again, that I loved her and would marry her, even if the whole Greek nation should object ; and that I looked to her to find means of bringing about an interview. I could see she was troubled, but she promised me to do what she could, and said she would see Kyria Pounditis that very day. With the tact peculiar to all Greeks she showed no surprise at my proposal, but just before she left the room she turned and

said, "Mais, M'sieu must beware of her people, for she is an Albanian. And M'sieu will marry her?" "You need have no fear of that if she is willing" I replied ; and we parted.

All that day I was miserable and distract. I could think of nothing but my darling and her pure sweet face. Annette had gone out when her morning's work was over, and I was wretched until she returned. My sisters had gone to a party at the British Legation, and I amused myself by turning out the contents of their colour boxes, leaving them in worse order than I found them, and incurring a scathing rebuke from both Dolly and Edie on their return.

About six o'clock Annette came back. I quickly followed her to the *salle-à-manger* in obedience to a nod of her head, and closing the door stood in silent expectation.

"M'sieu, I have seen Kyria Pounditis, who, as M'sieu knows, is my cousin. The young girl is Mademoiselle Marika, who, as I told M'sieu before condescends to honour with her presence the marriage of her old nurse's child. She belongs to a family that traces its ancestry back to Per-

icles, and she is betrothed, against her will they say, to the chief whom M'sieu so angered last night. My cousin warned me of the danger M'sieu would encounter if he persisted in his design ; for she thinks Hadji Mulak saw M'sieu last night at the window (Oh, I bound her to silence. M'sieu need not fear), and he is a fearful enemy—they say in the mountains that he claims descent from Lilith's daughter, whom she had by Satan when she fell. But I, I knew M'sieu ; and swelling up in the English way, told her that M'sieu feared nothing, not even the devil, and much less his descendant. And I said M'sieu would see Ma'amselle Marika again, and that she must contrive a way, or be responsible for a large amount of bloodshed. Parbleu, I impressed her with the fact of M'sieu's determination ! Then she confessed that on the foregoing night Ma'amselle Marika had talked of nothing but the "English Kyrios," so terrifying my cousin that she gave her a "*poudre d'amour*" to make all right again. Then, M'sieu we talked and thought, and now, *voilà*, we have found a way." Here Annette stopped for breath, and

to see the effect of her tale on me. Observing my impatience she went on hurriedly, in her curious mixture of Greek, French and English, which all Greek servants speak.

“Be not surprised, M’sieu, but know my cousin has a baby.” She paused after this, but I motioned her to continue : “Well, M’sieu, she has, and a big child too, though I should not boast of it, as I am to be godmother, if M’sieu is willing.”

I stared at her in amazement. What the deuce had I to do with her cousin’s baby ; and why should I, who detested babies, be the means of determining who should be its godmother ? I told her so with more force than elegance and with a reproachful look she went on :

“M’sieu must know that my cousin’s child is yet unbaptized, for the oil, the garlic, the wine and the priest, cost money ; and Kyria Pountitis, although not poor, has six children already. One hundred drachma is a large sum to pay ; but if M’sieu will provide the money, my cousin will hire the priest, and buy the oil and garlic and wine—and M’sieu will have a chance to see his

Ma'amselle Marika again—but ah, M'sieu must take care what he does, for the Albanians will have to be asked too; as they are in the city as a garde d'honneur for Ma'amselle, and if M'sieu should pay too much attention to Ma'amselle there would be trouble." I was startled at first, but upon reflection, the plan seemed to me a good one; and drawing out my purse, I gave Annette five gold napoleons.

"But is there no other way?" I asked. "It seems absurd for me to pay for a child's baptism in order to give myself an opportunity to see 'Ma'amselle,' as you call her. Can I not call on her openly, and state my intentions publicly?"

"Impossible for M'sieu to do that," said Annette, "he would not be admitted to the house, mine is the only way open."

She went away with the money, promising to arrange the matter at once. After that the days dragged slowly by, and I amused myself by teasing my sisters. Poor little things, how they must have hated me that week! I think Edie suspected something, for one morning early she stole into my room before I was up, looking in

her white silk wrapper and golden curls, like some fairy bent on a merciful errand ; and coming up to the bed, her eyes heavy with sleep, she put her fair head on the pillow for a minute. Then she kissed me, and saying "Poor Fergus," went away. At length I found a note on my table one afternoon, inviting me to the christening feast of Kyria Pounditis' youngest son. I smiled grimly as I read the invitation, and thought of my five napoleons. After dinner, for the ceremony was to take place that evening, I made some excuse and hurried away, first slipping my small silver-mounted American revolver into my breast pocket, for I knew there would be a serious risk should I be discovered. No need of Annette this time. Did I not know each step of the way ? The scene at the house was almost the same. Again the tom-toms sounded, and the kilted Albanians passed in as I came up ; but the rooms were arranged differently. I recognized my old friend, the snuffy boy, who stood with his dirty prayer book before a stone font in the largest of the three rooms, and then I looked about for

Marika. My heart gave a great bound as I saw her in a corner, dressed in pure white, a collar of gold about her slender neck; and her hair done in the old style made famous by the Venus of Melos. She caught my eye, and blushing adorably, looked down.

I had resolved to put my fate to the test that night and tell Marika of my love. Little reeked I of the risk I ran. My veins held ether rather than blood, and although my brain seemed burning, it held one distinct purpose—to win Marika or die.

I looked for Hadji-Mulak, but he was absent. I praised the gods for that, and remained standing near the door, as I wished to avoid attention. Kyria Pounditis hustled up to me finally, and, while pretending to ask after my sisters, whispered: "The small salon is at the service of the noble Kyrios. Marika will follow, but first swear to me thou wilt hold her honour dear as thy sisters' own," and she caught my arm.

"I swear it," I said, "I will marry her in all honour. Now let me go."

With a sigh she moved away, motioning me to follow.

“The noble Kyrios must depart then? Well I am sorry, but perchance some time he may again honour this poor house.”

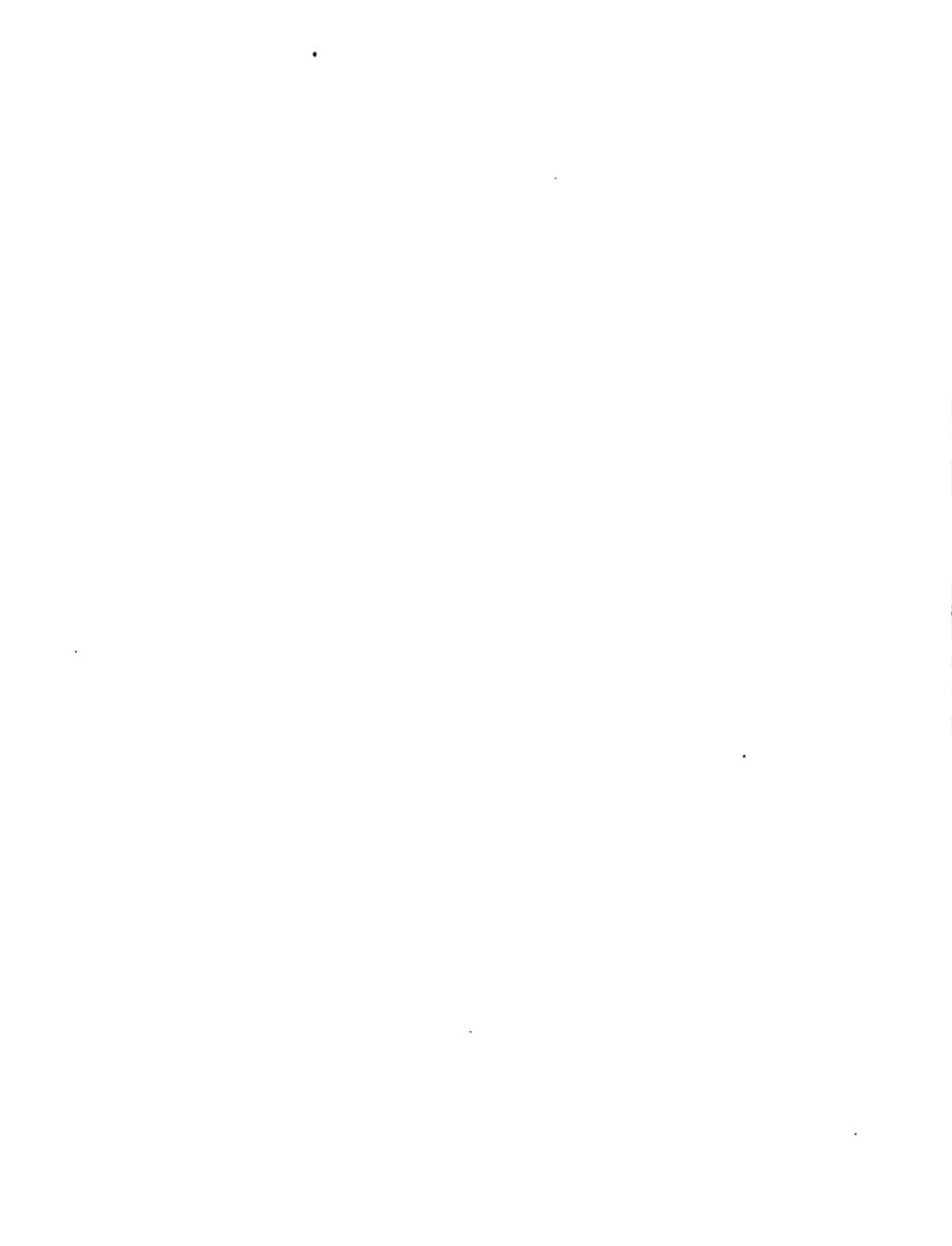
I went out after her, meeting Hadji-Mulak at the door. He scowled at me as he went on, but said nothing. Arrived in the street Kyria Pountitis darted into a small passage which I had before noticed, beckoning me to follow. I found myself, after traversing the same garden where I had been with Annette, in a small hall, and then in a small salon, prettily decorated, and with no other door other than the small one through which we had entered.

Saying, “Wait here,” the Kyria vanished and I staid alone to meet Marika. The room was evidently near the ones we had left, for I could hear the snuffy boy drawling out the prayers of the Greek church; and presently a loud splash, a shrill scream and harsh laugh announced that the child had been dipped head foremost into the font of oil, and was now being waved about by one leg, while the demons were exorcised from his small person.

Then the small door noiselessly opened; Marika glided in and stood with her arms folded in front of me.

She was a dream of beauty as she stood there; her lovely face framed in golden hair, her graceful maidenly figure trembling with mingled modesty and love, her quick breathing making sweet music in the room. I stood still, entranced, hardly daring to move, until she looked up and her eye met mine. Then I could not restrain my love and flung myself on my knee before her, crying: "O, Marika, take pity on me." For a moment that slender figure in white stood there, then the door opened violently—a shot sounded, and I looked up to see a wild convulsive spasm shake my darling's form as she fell, her white dress deluged with blood. Stupified, I embraced her, then the truth burst upon me. In the doorway stood Hadji Mulak, exulting in his handiwork—a fiendish smile on his lips—the soul of all his evil ancestors looking from his eyes.

One instant he stood there, exulting; the next he was in Hell, where he belonged—for I fired, and he fell back, cursing me.



THE ARROWS OF HERACLES.

A ROMANCE OF CORFU.

I.

THE MIRROR.

It was a bright May morning, and the sun was beating down with a brilliancy already trying, upon the stranded and stony ships of Ulysses in the little natural harbour below the castle and estate of "Mon-Repos." And in the month of May, on the island of Corfu, the sun is not to be despised ; for if he lights up the dusty olives with a silvery radiance, and brings out the delicious scent of innumerable tropical flowers, he is also very strong at noonday, and wise people seek the cool seclusion of their bamboo furnished salons until he has declined far into the west, and the sky has burst into a yellow and pink harmony of colour, while clouds, clothed in ashes-of-roses mourn the Monarch's downfall.

From the harbour one can see little of the old half-castle, half-villa, that bears the restful name of "Mon-Repos;" but by mounting the winding footpath some few hundred feet, a good view of the old building may be obtained. It stands back from the edge of the bluff upon a raised terrace, and had evidently been once surrounded by a moat. The architecture was in the old Italian style, and the general effect was that of a huge white pile of stone, with long carved arcades on every side; reminding one of cloisters, and looking very cool with modern Venetian jalousies and green blinds, accompanied by pretty coloured awnings over the principal windows.

In the older part quaint casements were filled in with diamond panes—one of which swung open for air—in leaden settings. Honeysuckle climbed about all the windows on the ground floor, and the fragrant blossoms peeped in through the cracks of the blinds, filling the house with perfume, as the breeze blew in little scented gusts.

The house ran up for three stories, and the battlemented front gave it a dignified look, to

which its evident age added greatly. The moat was still to be traced about half a hundred yards distant from the house, which it surrounded. Huge magnolias, whose white blossoms framed in dark green leaves, made a lovely picture, sprang from its empty bed. On a hot spring day, like the present, when a slight sea breeze stirred the old trees, the waxen blossoms swayed languidly to and fro, and sent an exquisite perfume through the weary air, every now and again whitening the dry ground with their petals until it seemed a soft velvet pile from the looms of Brussels. Two tall watch towers guarded either end of the building, and on one side a flat roof covered with a trellis work of vines in the Syrian style, commanded a fine view of the sea beneath. Altogether the house was a tasteful mixture of the old and new, in which the most had been made of what was already there.

The estate had been in the Walrund family for four generations now, ever since old Major Walrund had come out with Mr. Gladstone, when that versatile statesman was Lord High Com-

missioner of the Ionian Islands. Before that it had belonged to the Quartano family, one of the oldest and proudest on the island. And the look of the place bore out its name. Situated on the further side of the island, miles away from the town, on the shore ; there was an atmosphere of perfect rest and quiet about it that was very tempting. Miles of olive woods surrounded the house on two sides, and the sleepy, quivering air between the gnarled old trunks, almost forced upon one the necessity of coolness and rest. The huge front door swung invitingly open on this hot May morning, and a long, cool stone-paved hall was open to the view. A quaint collection of arms and armour hung about the walls ; and a marble basin of clear water in the centre, into which a small stream musically fell from the mouth of a marble Faun, made the atmosphere deliciously fresh. Wide shallow stairs of oak led to the upper regions, and all along the hall light silken curtains furnished admittance to rooms equally cool and comfortable. A slight murmur of voices came from behind one of the portières which masked

a cosy little nook known as "the den," where the chatelaines of the establishment read and wrote and messed—as girls will—to their heart's content. The floor was polished wood, quite bare, and the walls were panelled in dark oak, with a few quaint old prints here and there. Two huge tables were littered over with work, colour boxes, fret saws, cameras and scrap books. The room made no pretension to elegance and was merely a cosy little retreat. A small window high up admitted a dim light, very cooling on that warm day, and the trickle of the falling water in the hall outside came pleasantly to the ear.

Two girls were eagerly talking, as they watched a picturesque Greek servant unpack an old box they had just unearthed in the attic. Both were beautiful and in different ways.

Venetia, who was nearly twenty-four, was tall and fair with a full figure, high bust and general air of distinction. Blue eyes and pale golden hair harmonized well with her aquiline nose and rather ripe lips, above a firm chin; while the general effect of her appearance was to

convey forcibly the fact that Venetia Preston-Beauchamp was an aristocrat to the tips of her fingers. Marjorie Walrund, otherwise Guenn, her cousin, was several years younger and a contrast. She was of middle height with a willowy girlish figure, a slender waist and very small hands and feet. Her hair was dusky brown and wandered over her forehead in careless little curls, against the dead creamy-white of her skin. Her eyes were usually dark hazel, but in moments of excitement their restless changing glow varied with every thought and impulse. Her nose was a little—but charmingly little—retroussée, and her small white teeth gleamed bewitchingly through her rose-tinged lips, the lower of which was a trifle full; and her chin—ah, that was enough to drive a hermit wild—with a cleft in the middle suggesting images of Venus or Psyche. They lived here all alone, these girls, with their old maiden aunt, a hard-headed Scotch woman, who was guardian to both Guenn and her cousin. To Guenn, the last of her family, the estate of "Mon-Repos" belonged, having been left to her by her

father; but Venetia, who was her first cousin on her mother's side, had always lived with her on the island of Corfu, and was very wealthy in her own right. Both were orphans and were devoted to each other, for no thought of rivalry ever came between them, as each was so attractive in herself that she had no need of jealousy. They were eagerly watching the unpacking of the box now, and Guenn's impatience urged her to move the servant aside and finish the work herself. The box had evidently been carefully packed, and the contents were wrapped in several layers of soft cotton wool.

"Do be careful, Guenn, mind you don't drop it now! Oh, do be careful. Ah,—," and Venetia gave a long sigh of satisfaction as a quaint old French mirror was lifted from the nest of sawdust where it had reposed for nearly a century, until it had been re-discovered by these two girls. It was an old mirror. A narrow border of untarnished gilt enclosed the oviform glass which swung on two small gilt supports, while on the top, in the centre, a coat of arms appeared; a bear sable, rampant on a field or,

one paw grasping a stylus, with the motto “Cave Sagittum.”

There was an indescribable daintiness and fashion about it truly Parisian, as Parisian things were a century ago ; and no wonder the two girls standing by exclaimed at the old glass.

Only that morning Guenn had been rummaging after some bathing dresses—the sight of the dancing waves from her bedroom window having been too much for her—and remembering that they had been put away in the attic the previous autumn, had looked for them there. Under one of the old window seats she had found this dusty and tightly-fastened box. As the cover was lifted and the mirror taken out, a sudden gust of wind blew through the open doorway and sighed through the room, while a low rumble in the distance presaged a thunder-storm.

Guenn examined the crest curiously and then exclaimed : “Why, this is the Quartano crest, I haven’t seen it for years. Aunt Margaret said my grandfather had everything burned that belonged to the old count ; but this has evidently escaped the fate of the others. Shall you mind if

I have it in my room, Venetia? 'Twill match the rest of my things so well."

"Tell Vassouli to take it to your room, Guenn, dear. Of course you must have it in your boudoir, and it will go prettily with your yellow and white dressing table; go up with him, see it placed as you want it and then come down to the drawing-room to me. I want to talk with you."

Guenn obeyed, and Vassouli soon deposited the old mirror on the dainty toilet table, saying "Merci, Kyria," as he showed his teeth in a grin of delight in taking the bright new drachma Guenn gave him. When the echo of his tread had ceased, Guenn stood long before the glass consulting it as to her fair face. She wore a violet silk blouse (slightly gathered at the neck and cut low to show its snowy softness) over a brown tweed skirt, from which russet shoes peeped forth. Her dressing table was like herself, virginal, fresh and dainty. It was draped and festooned in the quaintest way with yellow and white silk, and now, when the old mirror was in place, Guenn deftly threw a scarf of

yellow silk over the top, making a perfect harmony of tone. A silver toilet set, brushes, combs, powder-box and glove-stretcher, with, I grieve to say, a dainty rouge-pot and sundry other articles, all in hall-marked English silver, glistened there, and an open carved ivory box held countless little gold pins, for Guenn was a connoisseur in pins and insisted on having solid gold ones for every-day use.

A photograph in a low silver frame was conspicuous on the table. It held the picture of a handsome Englishman, not over twenty-five, with a passionate, but honest, dark face, and curling hair. A glance at the picture showed instinctively that he must be tall and graceful, with brown eyes, dark hair and a brilliant expression. In short, his picture looked like that of an Englishman who took his tub every morning and eschewed bay-rum and all scents. Guenn respected him as much as she loved him, and had done so ever since their engagement made a year ago, and used to say as she stood in front of his picture explaining its beauties to a friend : "Just notice how different it is to the

picture of a Frenchman ! Fergus knows what is proper. He never puts on a frock coat until four o'clock, and is never out of his dress clothes after seven, while he would be horrified at the idea of wearing a top hat with a sack coat ; and then the cut of his clothes ! Of course he goes to Poole ; French tailors, my dear, are horrid, and only succeed in producing caricatures of the English mode. What can be expected from a country whose chief magistrate wears a straw hat with a frock coat ? " But when Guenn got on the subject of English clothes for men, she was inexhaustible, for her eyes were constantly offended by the impossible way in which the Greek and Frenchmen of the island dressed.

She sank down now on a low cushioned chair, upon which rested an eider-down cushion in white with yellow ribbons at the four corners, and earnestly looked at the picture, as she toyed with the quaint old ruby ring she always wore. Her thoughts were rapid and covered much ground, as she talked unconsciously to herself. 'And so he is coming here—actually here ! Fresh from London and the delights of Belgravia to

this out-of-the-way corner of the world—to Corfu—well, I am not ashamed of it—and I shall try to make his week so pleasant he'll count every corresponding minute in the next, and go over it again and again to lengthen the pleasure of recollection."

"Do I love him truly, I wonder? I think I do. He is my ideal of what a man should be, and I must keep my promise to him now at all events. But I am tired, very tired sometimes, and then I wish I could lie down among the daisies and sleep my life away—Venetia is calling and I must go."

She went slowly down-stairs, for she hated to leave her pretty room. You already know her dressing-table, so it is only necessary to say that her bed was one of the light modern French affairs, in highly polished brass, and done up with light yellow and white draperies. Above the bed, which was low, hung a replica of one of Bourgereau's pictures—Diana bathing, with Acteon watching on the bank; and the yellow light cleverly thrown on the picture through the stained glass in the old casement, was in sympa-

thy with the plan of the room, which was to have everything in harmony, for Guenn admired at a distance the school of Oscar Wilde. The walls were hung with thin yellow and white Chinese silk from the Flowery Land, with huge griffins in various attitudes sprawling over it. A small dressing-room opened from one corner, where Wedgewood pitchers and basins and a big tub, with large flagons of violet water (Guenn used so much in her bath that she bought it wholesale) suggested matutinal ablutions. The rugs thrown on the polished floor of the bedroom were old carpets from Teheran, silky to the touch and all in the prevailing yellow hue. A huge bear skin was spread by the side of the bed and was the first thing in the morning to receive Guenn's little bare foot on its warm surface, before she thrust it into the dainty swansdown slipper that stood ready.

She found Venetia in the drawing-room, reclining on a low ottoman in one corner, her back supported by pillows and her eyes bent on "Lothair," for which clever novel the fair Venetia had a great fondness. She lifted her gaze

languidly as Guenn swept in. "You know Fergus Charlecote comes to-night ! Where do you put him ? I hope you have a big tub ready ? He will be miserable unless he has it, and tell Sophie to put rough towels in his room. If anything can make an Englishman swear, it is to have to dry himself with fine linen towels when he gets out of his tub—And you are sure of yourself, Guenn ? Remember you have not seen him for a year, and you had only known him six months when you were engaged ! "

Guenn blushed and a slight wave of colour rushed over her face. "I love him, Venetia," she said, and there was silence for a minute. "Well, we shall have a late dinner, Venetia ; he doesn't come until nine, and as my lunch consisted of a biscuit and a couple of fresh figs out there on the beach, I can hardly wait.

"Isn't the air heavy to-night, Venetia ? It seems strangely still, as if something were brooding over the house. I hope nothing will happen—I have a presentiment."

Venetia lifted her eyebrows slightly. "Happen, what can happen, child ? Fergus is hardly likely

to meet with an accident on his way here. Don't be silly, Guenn. As a child you were morbid. Try to shake off such fancies. Fergus' sisters, will have no patience with you, and if you mean to ride to hounds with the Quorn, nerves will prove burdensome indeed."

Guenn made no reply, but strolled restlessly about the room, picking up knick-knacks, only to drop them and fluttering the leaves of books solely to reject them. Finally she subsided in the bay-window with an old volume of "Pendennis," and lost herself again in the discussions of Pen and George Warrington.

The room was certainly quaint. To reach it one had to descend two steps from the hall. The ceiling was of great oak beams, unpainted, but highly polished, at a proper height from the floor. Around the wall ran dwarf book cases, also in oak, only breaking at the big bay-window, which was a nest in itself, and where all the children's books were banished. Reclining here on the broad window seat, you were in perfect seclusion, and could survey the room without yourself being seen. In the middle of the room

was a great oak table strewn with the latest books and papers, under a sun lamp, which cast a soft light through its violet shade on the dark red rug and the rich red satin and velvet furniture. At the further end of the library was the huge old-fashioned fireplace where a back log burned and glowered all the winter long, and on the chilly evenings in early spring and late autumn. A highly polished fender kept the sparks from flying about, and near it the most cosy and comfortable chair in existence lulled you to repose. It was a chair (upholstered to match the rest of the room) originally intended for an invalid, and you could swing it around toward you in almost any position.

A delicate perfume always hung about the room ; and along the tops of the dwarf bookcases were countless photographs and bric-a-brac from all over the world. Here Guenn and Venetia were waiting for Guenn's accepted suitor—and for dinner. They both loved that room and so they might, for there was an indescribable home-like charm about it, usual among the old Devonshire country houses whence their family came.

Presently the dressing gong sounded, and Venetia sprang up. "Time to dress, Guenn, come along," and hastened up the shallow oaken stairs. Guenn hastily followed her, for was not Fergus almost here?

Her maid was already in her room with a can of hot water, laying out towels, and arranging her gown for the evening. Guenn quickly dressed, and when the maid had finished fastening the string of pearls, that had once been worn by her great-grandmother, about her neck, she surveyed herself with pardonable satisfaction in the old mirror, now her own property. She wore a clinging white gown, simply made, with a soft frill about the slender neck, and thin transparent muslin over her arms, that showed the warm, creamy flesh beneath. An old-fashioned chate-laine, that jingled as she walked, completed her costume, and she looked a fit subject for one of the old masters, as she stood at the head of the stairs, rubbing with her handkerchief the padlock bracelet she always wore, and which Fergus Charlecote had placed on her wrist a year ago.

Suddenly she turned and ran back to her room to consult her mirror again, for doubts began to arise whether Charlecote would really find her pretty or not. She looked in the glass and started. Whence came that expression? The mirror reflected back a face haggard and wan with grief and awful terror over some approaching doom, mingled with an uncontrollable piteous fear—of death? She shuddered as she looked. “Heavens, do I look like that? God help me! Susanne, Susanne,” she cried, and as the maid appeared, “Do I look ill, Susanne, is my face pale?” “*Mais non, Mademoiselle, vous avez la figure bien belle, avec un petit peu de couleur. Voyez-vous,*” and she held a small silver hand-glass before her mistress. The glass reflected back only a fresh young face, with a faint colour, and a startled, puzzled look—nothing of the awful expectation shown in the other mirror. Guenn quickly turned and looked in the old glass. It, too, only reflected her own sweet face with nothing strange or unnatural about it. She rubbed her eyes, murmuring: “Did I dream

I wonder, or am I going blind, or perhaps the glass itself is dim ?

“ Polish that mirror, carefully, Susanne and—” but just then the noise of wheels was heard, and she rushed away with a wild cry of delight.

II.

HOW “MON-REPOS” OBTAINED ITS NAME.

The door down-stairs opened, Guenn heard a strong, manly voice greeting Venetia and almost immediately saying, with a touch of anxiety: “But where is Guenn ? ”

She hesitated no longer, but flew down the stairs and into his arms, while Venetia discreetly retired into the drawing-room. Guenn lay in his embrace for some seconds, too deeply moved to speak, while he, after the first rapturous “my darling,” was silent, too ; absorbed in the deep bliss of seeing her and pressing her to his heart again.

"This is a great happiness, Guenn," he murmured! "I have longed for this hour. I have so much to tell you, dearest."

Venetia came out and smilingly welcomed Fergus, saying: "We won't keep you longer, now, do go up stairs. I know you are dying to get rid of some of the dust of travel. Dinner is nearly ready, and you must make haste."

He smiled at Guenn as he obeyed: "Just for a minute darling," he whispered, and ran up the broad stairs, following the old butler, who solemnly preceded him.

His athletic figure showed well in his travelling suit of tweeds and his dark sunburnt face looked very handsome as he turned on the landing to shout: "The old room, I suppose?"

The girls went into the library, Venetia to calmly pick up the last volume of *Rudyard Kipling's* quaint tales as she nestled in her comfortable chair, and Guenn to stand silently by the window too blissfully happy for speech. They waited for fifteen minutes, then a light, quick tread was heard on the stairs, and Charlecote came in, looking tall and distinguished in his

evening clothes ; for black and white suit dark men, and the much abused costume is capable of lending dignity to the well-built masculine figure. He had in his hand two packages, one, a round box, he handed to Venetia : " There my dear cousin, are some sapphires, that will suit your favorite style of gown." Venetia started up with a cry of pleasure, while Guenn, with a pretty smile, rose to receive her gift. He handed her a curious Indian box carved in ivory and inlaid with precious metals in the forgotten manner of the Burmese gold beaters.

It opened by touching a small spring, which he showed her, and inside she saw three small drawers. " Ah—how lovely, Fergus,—they are superb," she cried as she opened the first, which held, on a blue satin bed, a necklace of magnificent pearls.

" Why, each one is as big as a large pea, they are wonderful," Venetia said, drawing near.

" Now, Guenn, the second drawer," and Guenn opened it, to find a necklace of glistening emeralds on a white satin bed.

"Oh, Fergus, you naughty boy, to get such lovely things. How extravagant !, but they are exquisite," and Guenn went on to the third drawer with a heightened colour.

It held a magnificent green sapphire set in a ring—an enormous stone, and beautiful, in its greenish opaline tint, beyond compare.

It was a rarity indeed, for green sapphires are not found under every bush.

Guenn was perfectly overcome. "How can I thank you, darling ?" she whispered, leaning against him as her eyes filled with tears.

"By fixing our marriage day at once," he replied, smiling kindly down at her blushing face. "Come, dear, fasten the pearls about your neck and let me see how the wares of New Bond-street please my Greek girl's fastidious taste."

Guenn obeyed smilingly, and Venetia helped her to fasten the beautiful necklace about her fair throat, above the string of much thinner, smaller pearls that had belonged to her mother's grandmother.

Just then the butler came to the door with : "Dinner is served," and they all went into the

long passage which led from the central hall, where cozy unexpected nooks greeted the eye, furnished, some in the Indian, and some in the Chinese and Japanese style.

Venetia had also put on her sapphires, and they gleamed blue against her white neck, as she swept down the hall.

The table was laid in the small breakfast-room, as the dining-room itself was too big and dreary for their small party of three, and very comfortable and cosy it looked, shining with silver and glass under the big sun lamp.

A small, quiet old lady in spectacles glided in, and was greeted as "Aunt Margaret" by all.

It was a merry meal, for Charlecote was full of the latest London news, and had all the gossip of the clubs at his finger ends; and Guenn and Venetia laughed, as he told them of Mrs. MacKay's last big dinner to H. R. H., and how the Prince had snubbed a prominent member of the Peerage on his presuming to make fun of the transatlantic hostess; and of Fred Leslie's death, and the sense of personal loss felt by his friends at the end of a true manly life; and about

Prince George's love for his cousin, the pretty Princess May of Teck, and his despair, because his royal grandmother refused to countenance the match, thereby accounting for his state of single blessedness at the age of twenty-seven.

Guenn was indignant over this. "I think Her Majesty might let him choose for himself. The whole English nation is interested in the match, and Princess May is twice as popular as any foreign princess would be," and her lover sent a very tender smile in her direction, for he divined the spirit that dictated the remark and knew it was not all concern for bonny Prince George's welfare. And then they discussed Ibsen's latest play, and Guenn announced her disgust at "Ghosts" and its companions: "Why, the man will be founding a tragedy on a tumour, or a low comedy on a boil, next," thereby calling down a shocked look from Miss Preston.

After dinner, Guenn and Fergus strolled out under the magnolias, and Venetia returned to her tales and a cup of thick, Turkish coffee, which she had always indulged in since her visit to the East, a few years ago.

The lovers walked on silently for a few minutes. then Charlecote spoke. "Guenn, dear, you know what I'm about to say. Our wedding day has been put off so many times, can't you make up your mind to settle the date now darling? You know my people are very anxious to have us come back and settle down in Devonshire. They want me to go into Parliament, and I must make haste to do all this, don't you know dearest.

Come, little woman, name the day. I am anxious to have my girlie all to myself, and I cannot bear to think of leaving her here any longer. For Guenn, a sort of mystery always seems attached to this place, and I can never get rid of a dismal foreboding while I am here. And I have heard some rumours, silly servants talk, I dare say, that the place is uncanny."

Guenn hesitated, nervously playing with the fringe on her blue and white shawl, then a look of determination came into her face, as she looked up at her lover and her hand unconsciously stole to the beautiful pearls about her neck. "Well, Fergus, since you wish it, I'm content. Let our marriage take place on the twentieth of June.

Mamma was married then, and I wish to have the same day. But I want the wedding here, in dear old 'Mon-Repos,' in the room where Mamma was given away. This is the first of May, so you can't say I delay matters ; and now, sir, if you show yourself a good boy, Auntie, Venetia and I will allow you to escort us to London where the trousseau must be bought, unless you would like me to get the corbeille at Athens ! There, sir, what do you say to my plan ? After spending four weeks in England, we can come back here for the wedding and then go wherever you like."

Charlecote did not reply in words, but his actions betokened so much satisfaction that Guenn laughingly broke from him and ran into the house.

"She's a dear little girl," he murmured as he looked after her. "And it will please my people. But when I proposed to her last year at Hurstbourne to please the mater, I never thought she would accept me ! I really think she has grown to love me. At any rate I'll devote my life to her." Strange thoughts of his vanished boyhood

came to Fergus then, as he waited in the pale starlight. Memories of his boyish love for Angelica who had died; and of his sudden passion for the fair Marika, to whom his love had meant death; and then a vision of a passionate child rose rebukingly before him, and he could almost see the oval face, palely coloured, from which a dancing pair of eyes peeped forth under a tangled mass of copper-brownish hair.

She had been in short frocks when he had first met her, and he had made love to her in an eager, boyish way, and then had turned to someone else, never thinking of the consequences. She, poor child, after many struggles, had given her all to him, and her wild girlish love had killed her. Charlecote had gone to her funeral, filled with passionate remorse, and he never forgot the waxy face and the cold chill of the lovely lips he had once kissed so fondly. This memory with other sad ones helped to keep him pure, and had stirred the slumbering depths of his manhood. Now he was a fairly good man, as far as any one of us can be called good. He had not committed a great sin, but his remorse was ever present and

kept him from wicked deeds. Memory came to him often in the watches of the night; when the wind sighed sobbingly through the pines, and the cold radiance of the moon pierced him like an arrow, as he thought of the dead child who had loved him so uselessly.

The master lines of Browning often came to him :

“ How sad and bad and mad it was,
But, oh, how it was sweet ! ”

Much thought had given him a creed he tried to live up to.

According to his belief if a man had once done wrong, he should try during the rest of his life not only to sin no more, but to do a double amount of good, to keep the balance true. With a sigh he shook off these sad thoughts and went in to spend a quiet hour with the girls and Miss Preston, in the library talking over plans; until they finally decided to all start for London and Brindisi by the next steamer, as Charlecote had some important business at home; and the girls and Miss Preston promised they would try hard to get ready in time.

They decided to spend a month in getting the all-important trousseau and then return in time for the wedding on the twentieth of June. "That's a lively plan and means some exertion, Master Fergus. So I hope you appreciate what we are doing for you," said Guenn.

"Indeed I do, dearest. But now let us look up the steamers. To-day is Friday, and the next leaves for Brindisi on Monday. So you have one day to show me the sights of the island. I will send my man over to the city to engage cabins to-morrow, I see it is the "Cambodge" that we shall take." But here Miss Preston broke in, looking rather anxious : "Isn't this very hurried, Fergus ? Of course we can get off in time, but is it really wise ?"

The young man got up and leaned on her chair affectionately, for he was a great favorite of hers.

"It is the only thing to do, dear Miss Preston. You know I must be back in Newton Abbot in time for the election they expect there. And I promise to take good care of you all."

When the girls joined their eager pleadings to his, the gentle old lady soon gave in, settling the

matter herself by suddenly exclaiming : "Of course, Guenn will have to have her settlements drawn up in London, and it is none too soon to set about them."

At this moment the old butler appeared in the doorway, bowing apologetically. "H'if you please, Miss Preston, they say down-stairs that there h'is to be h'a great dance to-morrow, h'in the h'olives near 'ere ; the peasants h'are to dance, h'and the h'young ladies might like to h'attend, likewise Mr. Charlecote."

A cry of delight from Guenn interrupted him. "Oh, delightful. The women and girls all come out in their best for this dance. I know where it is to be. You may tell them we shall come, Freeman ; may we not go, Auntie ?"

Miss Preston smiled her assent and Guenn and Venetia immediately proceeded to plan out the day's excursion.

"It will be an all-day affair, Fergus, so we must take our luncheon. I'll drive you in the village cart with "Queenie" and Venetia and Auntie can come in the low phæton behind old "John Brown." It will be a really picturesque sight,

for the peasants only dance in this way every two years, and each year they go farther into the olive groves, for they are jealous of having strangers near, but they know Venetia and me, and I can promise you a welcome. But we must start early. I'll tell Freeman about the luncheon." And the gay girl darted off, leaving Venetia, Fergus and Miss Preston rather bewildered. Miss Preston soon hurried away to give directions for the packing; and Fergus hastened to follow Guenn, so Venetia was left alone to admire her sapphires. But a minute later a timid rap at the door admitted Susanne, who was pale and frightened.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, I so 'fraid ! Zat diable mirror ! Quand I polish and look in, it makes me *tres laide* and give me une expression *diabolique*—*il faut le casser*. *Je le dirai a Mees Guenn*."

But Venetia caught her firmly by the arm, "Not a word to your mistress, Susanne. It will only make her nervous. I will look at the mirror myself, to-morrow. It was only the moonlight—sh !" and as Guenn came dancing back into the room followed by Miss Preston and Charlecote,

Susanne rapidly disappeared, while Guenn exclaimed: "All the arrangements are made. We start to-morrow at nine. Fergus and I go in the village cart first, with luncheon—I hope you appreciate my care for your creature comforts, sir?" with a courtesy to Charlecote.

"Indeed I do, dearest, but had you not better get to bed now, or those roses in your cheeks will fade, and you will have a long day to-morrow."

Guenn pouted a little, as she prepared to obey. "One would think you wanted to get rid of me," she said, as she kissed Miss Preston and wafted a salute from the tips of her fingers to Charlecote.

Venetia laughed and with a gay "good night," swept up stairs with Guenn, passing her arm around her cousin's waist.

Charlecote held a short conversation with Miss Preston about their plans before she, too, went up stairs. After some discussion, she said slowly:

"Well, then, in England after our shopping is done, we shall all stay with Lady Dacre at Hurstbourne. I shall be glad to get Guenn away from

here. The servants have been talking a good deal lately about what they call the Quartano curse, and I have been afraid it will get to her ears. What! you have never heard the story; make Guenn tell it to you to-morrow when we are driving to the festa. Good night."

Charlecote left to himself downstairs, rang for a brandy and soda, which the old butler soon brought; and after a contemplative sitting of an hour, he too, went to bed, and silence reigned supreme in "Mon-Repos."

Guenn took a long time to undress that night, and several times stole a frightened glance at the old mirror standing quaint and beautiful on her dressing table. But no untoward reflection met her eyes, and she soon fell into a happy sleep.

Every one was up bright and early the next morning, and Charlecote returned from a swim in the sea, glowing with health, and with a hearty appetite for the delicious fresh figs and fish, which formed the chief part of the matutinal meal at "Mon-Repos."

Guenn was in a pretty muslin gown, with blue ribbons everywhere about it; and her lover told

her she was exactly like Dora in "David Copperfield," minus the curls and Gyp. But Guenn was pleased with the compliment and resented the amusement of her aunt and cousin: "People seem to think," she exclaimed after a mouthful of muffin, "that Dora was an empty-headed little goose; and they simply show their own ignorance in doing so, for no one but a woman of great nobility and strength of soul would have asked her rival to marry her husband when she lay dying, as Dora asked Agnes." And she gave an indignant toss of the head which seemed to convince her lover. They were waited on this morning by the Greek footman Vassouli instead of the old English butler who presided only at luncheon and dinner. He wore the usual Albanian costume: his short, embroidered jacket was open at the neck over rich embroidery belonging apparently to a linen shirt beneath, and a stiff, rustling fustanella, or short kilt, laughably suggestive of a ballet dancer, took the place of the more prosaic, but conventional, breeches. His legs were clothed in white tights, and his feet were enclosed in large red Russia leather slippers,

which curled up at the toe and ended in a tassle. Altogether he was a very picturesque object.

They started directly breakfast was over in the order agreed upon, Vassouli bringing out huge hampers and putting them in the village cart with Fergus and Guenn.

They had a lovely drive through the olives in the scented air of the morning—a long drive too, for “Mon-Repos” was some distance from the grove where the festa was to be held. Every now and then they met a fustanella-ed peasant, always with a red cap ending in a long, gold-fringed tassle, on one side of his head; and sometimes a woman in a very low-cut dress, and the embroidered red shirt of the island.

When they had fairly left the ground and the crowd of saluting white-kilted servants behind, Charlecote spoke :

“How did your home ever gets its name, Guenn? I have often wondered about it. Why ‘*Mon-Repos*? ’ ”

Guenn smiled, as she replied, putting on her tan Mousquetaire gloves :

“ That came down from the old Major, Fergus; the one who came out with Mr. Gladstone years ago, when that statesman was Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands, and every one expected him to betake himself to a diplomatic career. They say the Major got so tired of lectures from his chief on the Homeric text, after long days of official labour, that when he heard this place was in the market, he bought it and called it “ Mon-Repos ”; for he said he was tired out ; and I believe he settled down at once, without even going back to England.”

“ I see, but who had the place before the Major ? Were the owners Greeks ? ”

“ No, Fergus, they were Corfiotes, a very different thing, in their estimation. A Corfiote is the descendant of a noble Venetian family who has lived on the island for two hundred years, and who can show at least ten quarterings. A true Corfiote is jealous and haughty, and “ feudal ” if you know what I mean by that. He looks down on ordinary Greeks, and is a little tin god on wheels generally. Before the Major bought the estate, it had belonged for no

one knows how many years to the Quartano family. Old Count Quartano was the last of his line, and he had mortgaged his estate to the Bank of Corinth. He was a good deal thought of in the island, and the bank was afraid to foreclose, although he had never paid his interest, knowing his influence with the poor depositors forming the greater part of its clientèle (now don't laugh, I'm telling this bookishly on purpose); so things went on until just before he died, when by some means it came to his ears that the bank would sell his estate to a foreigner (the old Major), directly he died. They say he was in his last agony when the news came, and an old servant was the only one in the room (its the spare bedroom now) with him, besides his family confessor. He had been in a sort of stupour all day until the news reached him through some talk between old Phryne and the Priest. He sprang up in bed, and with his right hand lifted, he cursed whoever should buy his estate, he foretold some dreadful doom ; and then repeating the motto of his race "Cave Sagittum" fell back gasping, and, when the Priest held a mirror to

his lips, no breath dimmed the surface. He was dead. Then the Major bought the estate, unheedful of the curse ; and so far as I know, the family even to the third and fourth generations, has escaped it yet." There was silence for some time, as they drove on, passing gayly dressed crowds of people ; then Charlecote spoke, with an effort at a laugh. "And so that is the story of the curse of the Quartanos ! Well it seems to me rather indefinite. You are to beware of some arrow, and you have no reason to dread a mysterious mirror that was smashed long ago. But did the old Major, or his son, or your father ever incur this precious curse ?"

Guenn stopped to think a moment, then paled slightly. "The Major died from a shock of apoplexy brought on by a fall while exploring the caves, which the natives call the Arrows of Heracles—why, I don't know. My Grandfather, as you know, was shot in a duel on this island, just by the caves, and my Father died from heart disease while planting ivy at the cave's mouth. So you see the curse is dead long since, and I do not fear it. Here we are, and now if

you will tie 'Queenie', I will go and tell the women I have brought a stranger to their dance. There come Venetia and Aunt Margaret."

III.

THE CORFIOTE DANCE.

The scene of the festa was a wide grassy terrace, overshadowed by olives whose years went back beyond the memory of man, which overlooked the dark purple sea on which a few distant sails gleamed white as they tossed idly to and fro. The grass was of velvety softness and brilliantly green. As Guenn and her party slowly went forward many picturesque groups broke up, and two or three of the more prominent women came to greet them. Fergus saw with a sort of dismay that he was the only male present with the exception of several small boys who had not as yet assumed the *toga virilis*; so with commendable prudence he withdrew into the background, while Guenn with her aunt and Venetia met the women. One stood slightly in

advance of the others—a woman of unnumbered years, whose cheeks were furrowed with wrinkles—and whose palsied body was supported by a shaking stick. This was old Matron Marigoula, a sort of prophet among the women of the island, and one who had earned the reputation of having unlawful communications with the Evil One.

She it was who presided over these dances ; and she now stood smiling feebly as Guenn went up to her and spoke:

“We thank thee, dear Matron Marigoula, for permission to view thy dance. And we have brought a friend, dear Matron, one who will be my husband. Thou art not angry ?” And she slipped into the old woman’s hand a gold chain, the customary gift on the island from those who desired the old woman’s favour. She had a hoard of these hidden under the floor of her hut, and people often wondered what their final destination would be.

She accepted the gift now with a condescending smile, and nodding to Miss Preston and Venetia, peered long and curiously into Guenn’s flushing face. “Ye are all welcome maiden ;

and so this is the gay gallant ye are pledged to wed. Let me see him, let me see his face," and striding up to the disgusted Fergus she seized his arm ("pawed me all over," as he afterwards complained). "Ah, ye have a goodly, honest face. Ye have done wrong, but ye have repented and done good since, much good. And now thy hand." She looked at it long and carefully. "As I said, a troubled past, a fair present, and a troubled future." Then she took Guenn's hand and as she looked her brow grew darker, and she muttered and sighed—to Miss Preston's great alarm, causing her to draw back. "The Tsiganes can not mistake. A black shadow is over thee, fair Kyria. And a whisper comes to me from the past. The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children. And I say to thee, child, 'ware the arrow, 'ware it well. ("The old Count's motto, whew!" whistled Charlecote to himself). For evil threatens, although wisdom may stave off the evil. But enough of dark forebodings. Ye have come to see our dance. Ye shall see it. Begin!" And she waved her black and curiously carved staff. At once the maidens

and women who had been timidly whispering in the background among the olives, came together. The women could be told from the maids, for the maids were all in pure white, caught under the arm by quaint old silver ceintures and girdles, then falling in straight soft folds to their feet. On their heads were dainty crimson fezzes with small golden tassles, coquettishly adjusted a little to the left, so that the tassle should hang near their faces. And a curious sort of soft white sandal of undressed kid took the place of the prosaic modern shoe. They wore their dark hair unbound, and falling over their shoulders ; with most of them it reached below the waist. The women were nearly all in purple, their aprons trimmed heavily with gold, and they wore large fezzes with smaller tassles and dark brown sandals. They formed a circle, the maidens within, the women without. Then all commenced to glide slowly and monotonously around, holding their clasped hands high above their heads, and singing in rather a nasal undertone a curious song or roundelay, which had a weird mysterious air of

its own, that none of the guests had ever heard before.

Guenn was so delighted with it that she made Fergus write down the Greek words—which a wrinkled old peasant woman, whose ears were loaded with enormous gold rings and who was swaddled in countless scarlet embroidered cloaks, as she half-lay, half-sat upon a rude couch, gave him.

To please Guenn he afterwards put the words into rude English verse:

- “ A hilly village by the sea
Palm scented, olive crowned
Oft comes in wayward dreams to me
Palm scented, olive crowned.
- “ A dainty maiden dwelt there
Fair coloured, golden haired
Feigning sleep in her bower’s care
Fair coloured, golden haired.
- “ One night this place and maiden
Palm scented, golden haired
Seemed deep with sorrow laden
Palm scented, golden haired.
- “ They hovered long in elf clouds
Fair coloured, olive crowned
And vanished, waving ghost-shrouds
Fair coloured, olive crowned.”

Fergus apologized for this, and begged Guenn not to take it as a specimen of his literary labours. But she was pleased, and knew that if he had not made a polished translation from the Greek, that he had caught the idea.

After singing this song, or the Greek equivalent, for some time, the circle opened ; and a fair young girl advanced into the middle of the ring and began to chant a wildly sweet air, while the others joined in the chorus.

Fergus was enabled to take down the words of the chorus, but not of the verses, for the old woman seemed shy about repeating them, and she was probably right judging from what Charlecote heard :

“ Oh, my beloved thou art the Oak,
I, my beloved am the Vine,
We will entwine our lives, my beloved,
And the Vine shall bear grapes.”

There must have been fifteen or twenty verses, at the end of each of which this chorus was sung. Then they were all silent for a time while the terrible old beldame who had so startled Guenn stood muttering in the midst of the women

trembling as if about to fall, while she waved her staff about her head. Then while the women and maidens waited with bated breath, she broke into a low, quick chant which increased its speed rapidly, while she kept turning round and round, finally beginning to whirl dizzily, as she shouted the burden of her song. Miss Preston turned away as did Venetia, after ten minutes of this chant.

When it was over, Guenn drew a long breath and turned to Fergus with a questioning look, "What do you think of it," she asked.

"It is worth seeing," he replied, "the old woman ought to be put in a book."

Then they all drove back again, rather silent, revolving the curious dance in their minds.

"It is evidently a survival from classic times, a sort of a modern minor Eleusinian mystery. I don't wonder they do it in secret," said Fergus after dinner that evening as he and Guenn walked between the rows of scented magnolias.

"But I am more interested in our plans, dearest, than in modern revivals of classic absurdities," smiled Guenn, nestling up to her lover.

And after that their talk was interesting and rather private; but Guenn did not sleep that night until she had seen the old mirror, to which she had lately taken a great dislike, removed from its place on her dressing-table and carefully put away in the same box in which it had come. She watched her maid pack it, and as the last layer of sawdust hid it from view, she made a little *move* and said to herself: "Now I can sleep without having all sorts of dreams. I really believe the thing's bewitched, for I have dreamed of teeth for two nights running; and every one knows that is a sign of death if you dream it three times. What a narrow escape! I really think if I hadn't had it taken down, I should have dreamed of them again to-night. I wonder would Fergus mind, if I were to die?" And with a frightened look she ran across the room and jumped into bed.

All were late risers the next morning, Sunday, for they all felt more or less stiff after the long drives of the day before.

So while Miss Preston, who had absolved them all from the necessity of attending church

on account of the long drive into town, and the amount of packing to be done before the early start of the morrow, bustled about seeing that the maids packed the boxes properly, the young people, after a leisurely breakfast, strolled down to the water side to see the caves that fascinated Guenn, and which were called the Arrows of Heracles.

They were well worth a visit, for back of a narrow strip of white sand, on which the blue sea surged gently, a huge rounded hole partly covered with climbing ivy invited entrance. Three caverns opened into one another, each of a great height, and workmen were busily excavating in the fourth room. Numbers of small broken vases and old copper coins were scattered about, articles turned up almost daily by the workmen. A picturesque islander stood by with a huge wicker basket which, when full he slung over his shoulders and carried off, to empty outside. The party lingered here a little and then Guenn and Fergus went for a long walk, while Venetia returned to the house to read the Collect for the day and oversee the packing. After luncheon

Guenn and Fergus strolled down to the caves again, where they spent the afternoon.

And so the day passed happily away.

As they were to make an early start next morning, Miss Preston insisted upon the necessity of bed for the girls at, to them, an unearthly hour. But they were not unwilling, for the visit to the caves had tired them, and so the party broke up early.

Guenn and Venetia stood chatting for some time upon the upper landing, and Guenn announced a determination to which she had lately come: "I have grown tired of that old mirror, and I am going to take it to London with me and give it to Cousin Mabel. She loves those old-fashioned things, and I shall be glad to get it out of the house, it frightens me." Venetia laughed, and said good night, but after Guenn was safely in bed and her maid had finished packing, she came into the room, her long white wrapper trimmed with dainty lace trailing behind her, and leaned over her cousin's bed. "Perhaps you are right about the mirror, child; it seems foolish to say so, and yet there is something

about it that chills me whenever I go near it; and it seems at times to reflect things not just as they are. But good night, dear, sleep well."

Everything was in a great bustle the next morning. Trunks were brought down from the old attic, and several picturesque maids were kept flying about the house in a vain endeavor to collect Guenn's extensive wardrobe. But everything was at last ready, and a huge pile of boxes on the steps showed the intentions of the party. After a hurried breakfast they all drove over to the town of Corfu, to wait for the steamer, and both Venetia and Charlecote noticed Guenn's unusually quiet and pensive face. The drive in the early morning through the olive groves was lovely; and Charlecote more than once expressed his regret at leaving the lovely island so soon. "Why, I only got in from Athens the other day, and I haven't been about at all yet."

"Oh, never mind that," said Miss Preston, "after the wedding you'll have plenty of time to wander among these groves. But it is extremely short notice to start off on such a journey. It is

fortunate we had been thinking of England before."

Guenn was in poor spirits, for she loved the gay island with its lovely climate, and the old house was very dear to her. The drive was a long one, for "Mon-Repos" was beyond the "One - Gun - Battery," and almost the whole breadth of the island had to be covered before they came into the quaint white-villa-ed town. Charlecote enjoyed the drive particularly, for he was fresh from the sea, and grumbled at having to re-embark at such short notice. But he remembered that soon Guenn and he could choose their own paths, and that no obstacles of time would interfere with their complete enjoyment of each other's society.

And so he possessed his soul in patience.

IV.

THE JOURNEY TO LONDON.

They had reached the town now, and were driving under the old stone gate-way, supposed

to have been erected by the Venetians when their proud city ruled the Adriatic. Then on through the narrow streets past the plaza, down to the harbour and the steamer office. They had been fortunate enough to secure good rooms, and were at once rowed on board the "Cambodge" with their luggage. They were just in time, for the steamer was puffing thick angry clouds of smoke from her funnel, while the Blue-Peter was fluttering from the mast ; and no sooner had they gone on board, than the screw began to turn, and they were off for Brindisi. The ladies sat on deck under the awning, while the vessel glided out to sea through the narrow channel ; and then Guenn and Charlecote walked up and down the deck absorbed in happy chat about the future, while Venetia lost herself in "The Girl from Malta," and Miss Preston industriously knitted stockings. The sea was smoother than the traditional mill pond, and the air was delightfully warm and bright.

"Well," observed Miss Preston at last, "I hope you young people are satisfied. I never thought I should start for England at such short notice, after living ten years in yon heathen land,

with an occasional summer trip to Athens and Phaleron. But I'm not denying I'll be glad to see England again ; yet it seems a sad waste of time and money to be three weeks in London and then go back to Corfu to be married."

But Guenn exclaimed, " Oh, you know auntie, dear, I could never be married away from my own dear home ; and the room Mamma was married in. But there's the gong for the second 'breakfast,' and I've an appetite like a wolf."

They went below in high spirits and enjoyed the hearty luncheon they found there, Guenn eating such quantities of Russian caviare as to seriously alarm her aunt. But when they had reached the cheese stage, Charlecote looked quizzingly at Venetia, who was laughing with Guenn over some joke of their own, and said : " Out with it now, Venetia ; I know it's another of Guenn's tricks, but I want to hear it."

" Well then," said Venetia—" But you musn't tell," cried Guenn, " oh, well, I know you will, so go on," and the wrathful little damsel curled herself up on her end of the sofa, with a plate of *marrons glacés* in front of her.

“ Well,” Venetia began again, “ last winter in Athens, Guenn met Lord Archie Devereux, an awful young idiot who believed everything he heard, and she gave him an idea that Corfu was a sub-tropical sort of place, and that we all kept slaves ‘ad libitum ;’ and, of course, he believed her ; so when she came back to ‘Mon-Repos’ she had her picture taken in a hammock, with one of her maids fanning her, another holding a plate of fruit, and another kneeling down to take off her boots. This she sent him with a note saying that was her everyday appearance. Lord Archie actually believed it ; and I heard from Cousin Mabel that the story went all over London.”

Charlecote laughed heartily at this, but Guenn looked rather sober. She was anxious to have her lover see that she had given up all her pranks of late.

“ And too,” Venetia went on, “ she has taken some new idea into that head of hers, and thinks that absurd old mirror our aunt left to us has some malign influence over her, and——” but Guenn stopped her here with a curious mixture of dignity and pleading.

"Don't talk of that, Venetia dear, it worries me," and then she went on deck.

The afternoon was passed in reading and sewing, Charlecote ever keeping near Guenn, for he had been worried over her reception of her cousin's remark about the mirror. Dinner was hardly so cheerful, for a slight motion could now be felt, as the "Cambodge" got out into the open sea. Who does not know that "slight increase" of motion, towards evening when the vessel has left at midday; and the misery it brings? They all left the table rather early, to admire the lovely sunset which was turning all the western sea and sky to a dark gold mass, indistinguishable the one from the other. Sea gulls were hovering around the vessel, and their shrill cries were uttered in a mournful key. "If we were out on the Atlantic," said Charlecote, lighting a fragrant Havanna, "I should say we were in for a storm, but there's hardly time for that here, as we get to Brindisi early in the morning. I should suggest bed at an early hour for all of us, in consideration of our sixty hours' journey to London. It's almost a pity you've resolved not to stop in

Paris, but as your aunt wants to get to her own particular hotel as soon as possible, I don't blame her. Paris hotels are either very dear and very good, or moderately cheap and immoderately bad."

"I think I'll take a few turns with you, Fergus and then go down," said Guenn, taking his arm and walking with him up and down the deck, while the great steamer dashed through the fast-gathering darkness, the water astern making liquid music as they walked.

"You will think me silly, dear, but sometimes when the dark comes down so slowly and so surely, I feel as if I were being smothered; as if some dark terrible mass were being let down on me; and I lie awake, almost afraid to draw my breath, lest I should bring it down on me and be crushed; but with you, dear, I do not feel so frightened. Your presence seems to give me comfort and I lose my uglishments, as I used to call my tempers when I was a baby."

"You are slightly morbid, Guenn. Living in an old Greek chateau which was cursed by the former owner, evidently does not agree with you.

Never mind. After our marriage you shan't see it again for some time, I can promise you."

"Don't be cross, Fergus," Guenn murmured, "I know you don't mean to be; but still it sounds as if you were, when you speak like that, and it makes me miserable—I'm going to bed now. Good night, dearest, sleep well," and Guenn beckoning to Venetia, went below, where Miss Preston had long ago retired. Charlecote smoked numerous cigars and then, tempted by the beauty of the night, threw himself on a pile of rugs and shawls under the shelter of the steersman's cabin and slept. He dreamed of Guenn, and thought he saw her struggling in the grasp of the Hydra of Lerna, while he was powerless to aid. He was awakened suddenly by some hoarse shouts, and found it was early dawn and the steamer just entering the port of Brindisi. With a prodigious yawn he roused himself, and by a tip to the sailors washing the deck, got them to play upon him with the hose after he had hastily undressed.

Refreshed and invigorated by the impromptu "tub," he walked up and down for some time until the ladies joined him. It was a sunny

morning, and the town of Brindisi lay like a crown on the hillside, its white houses lit up by the rising sun, and suggesting peace, and cleanliness to anyone not familiar with its smells and dirt. There was no breakfast on board that morning, and our party was in a bustle collecting their small luggage and preparing for the *douane*. They were rowed ashore, to the custom house this time, and they thoroughly enjoyed the short trip through the maze of shipping that makes Brindisi one of the most important of the harbours of Italy. Guenn took a particular interest in a large P. and O. liner just off for India, and smiled brightly at the nurses and children who crowded to the side to see them pass. "See, Guenn," said Charlecote, "those two pretty young girls near the smokestacks. They are probably on the lookout for a husband, and I can tell you there is no surer way of getting one than to take a long voyage in a P. and O. steamer. Ask any old traveller: "It's a well-known fact."

"Fancy!" said Guenn, "I should never have the courage to go in one. Oh! here we are

at the *douane*. I hope they won't give us any trouble." The custom house was in a long, low white-washed building, and like the majority of such foreign establishments. The officials were dressed in the style of major-generals, at the least, with huge cocked hats and swords. They merely looked at the trunks of the travellers, but betrayed some curiosity as to the box containing the old mirror and insisted upon its being opened.

The chief, a tall, stout man, with a red face, and moustache and imperial like the late Emperor Napoleon's; when the box had been opened by some zealous subordinates, and the straw forming the top layer been removed, bent over the box and looked at the mirror. No sooner had he done so than he started back with a curse, his face deadly pale, and had his assistants not supported him, he would have fainted.

Guenn turned pale and called to Charlecote, "Go and see, dear. I know that mirror has caused it. And I feel sure some harm will come through it to us yet." He soon came back saying, "There's really nothing, Guenn. The old

boy must have had a fit. Look yourself." But Guenn refused to look, although both Venetia and Miss Preston looked and declared there was nothing to be afraid of. The remaining formalities were soon complied with, and the party quickly left for Baglioni's Hotel. But as Charlecote came on somewhat behind the others, the old chief stepped up to him and said in broken English :

"Have a care, Seer, zere is diablerie in zat mirror. *J'ai vu la figure*—the face of my dead femme. *Mon Dieu ! Prenez garde.*" "How absurd," muttered Charlecote, "I'm glad Guenn didn't hear any of that stuff. I'll smash the mirror if nothing else will do."

They drove to the hotel, and enjoyed a breakfast of luscious fresh figs and delicious new-laid eggs in the court yard, which is famous for its pretty fountain and for its wonderful collection of plants. Here Mr. Baglioni himself came to greet them, Charlecote having often stopped at his hotel in former trips to Albania and Greece. Their train—the through mail for London—did not start until the afternoon. So, after a siesta, Guenn with her cousin and Fergus strolled

through the streets and squares of the new town, managing to buy a few old silver spoons (for which she had a great penchant) on the way. It was fairly warm, and about three o'clock the streets became crowded with a brilliant mass of colour. Dark-cowled Franciscans and Capuchins mingled with the crowd, their sober garb resting the eye after a group of gorgeously clad fisher girls in short scarlet petticoats and blue bodices, had gone by.

“Not unlike Naples, Fergus, but one misses the fishermen and the songs.” But just then a young girl began to sing, accompanying herself on a zither, the old Neapolitan song :

“O’dolce Napoli
Suol beato,”

and then after some variations came the familiar,

“Barchetta mia
Santa Lucia,
Santa Lucia.”

But when she began to sing “Addio Napoli” they fled ; for they had all heard Patti sing that song in the Albert Hall ; and they dreaded

any other rendering. They ventured a short way up into the old town, the "citta vecchia," but the unbearable and foul odours they met, obliged them to return. "I've been up there once, Guenn," said Charlecote, "after some old gold forks, and I assure you, I didn't feel clean for a week after, in spite of numerous tubs. They live on garlic, and the air is full of it."

Then they returned to the hotel, just in time to get ready for the bus waiting to start for the station; and as the porters were loading the boxes and trunks on the roof, Charlecote noticed that Guenn gave a very perceptible shudder, as the box containing the old mirror was handed up. But when her eyes met her lover's she recovered herself, and smiled gaily at him as they jolted and rattled over the cobble-stones on their way to the station.

V.

EN ROUTE.

They found the Indian Mail waiting in the station, and had not much more than time to get their tickets, when they were whirled away. They settled down after awhile, when the small luggage had been deposited in the racks overhead, and the collection of rugs and pillows spread comfortably about. Charlecote had provided a large supply of books and magazines and Guenn soon lost herself in the sparkling pages of "Sybil," while Charlecote read *Bell's Life*, and Venetia calmly looked over the *Graphic*. They paid little attention to the country through which they were rushing at lightning speed, for it was getting dark, and the electric lamp in the carriage tempted them to read. They went on like this for several hours, until the carriage door was opened and an intimation given by the polite guard that a table d'hôte dinner would be served at seven o'clock in the dining-car.

"What a mercy we don't have to rely on the

nasty buffets at the stations," said Guenn. "The very idea gives me the horrors!"

"Yes, dear, I'm glad, too," Venetia, said, with a glance of lively scorn at the very thought. "Fancy a hurried meal, cheek - by - jowl with Hebrew bagmen and Italian officers, odourous of garlic—in a stuffy little room! Anyone who has eaten at a station table d'hôte in Italy can never forget it. These great brutes of Italian officers always push their way to the front and gobble their food, not caring how such insignificant creatures as we women fare, so long as they are satisfied! I wonder why gentlemen shun the army in Italy? It seems to be the paradise of the lower-middle class, and all the 'Tenente' and 'Sotto-Tenente' are the sons of small shopkeepers, with dreadful manners. Faugh—I can't stand them," and Venetia leaned back in her seat with a curl of the lip more expressive than words.

"You blame the poor fellows too much, Venetia," said Charlecote, "you forget they are mere boys, fresh from the shops or the counting house, with no manners formed; and fancying the world a stage for a special display of their talent,

with the planets, as boxes, holding an endless army of spectators. They are left to shift for themselves under a set of grizzled old officers who let them go to the bad as fast as they like, so long as they are attentive to discipline and do not appear too often in mufti. Then, too, the reason of their confounded impudence to ladies is because there is always to be found in garrison towns, especially on the Riviera, a set of fast American women who flirt with them outrageously ; and these people, who would not be received in society at home, give them a false idea of English and American gentlewomen."

"Oh, Fergus, how severe," laughed Guenn, "but don't let us have an argument, I'm hungry, and the train is slowing up. Let us go to the dining-car, I know Auntie's got an appetite." They hastily put on hats, shawls and overcoats, and alighted as the train stopped, only to immediately enter the long, brilliantly lighted dining-car, where they sat down to a delicious little dinner, neatly served, while all around them resounded the laughing chatter of a number of Anglo-Indians, just off the steamer, and happy in re-

turning to the chalk cliffs of England so soon. They went back to their carriage early, and after a game of *bézique*, composed themselves to sleep as best they might while sitting up in corners, for the *coupés-lit* had been all secured by the returning Anglo-Indian contingent, and there was no extra accommodation in the "through mail."

They were old travellers and did not sleep badly, but the cold, gray light of the morning stealing in through the windows revealed a rather uncomfortable looking party. At seven they reached Ancona and were all up early to take advantage of the half-hour's delay, and to freshen themselves up for the day's journey; after gulping down a hasty glass of steaming coffee served by sleepy white-aproned garçons with tumbled hair, in the day-before-yesterday's dress shirts. Charlecote by prompt action managed to secure a *tête-à-tête* walk with Guenn, before the others were ready, up and down the long stone platform.

"You are as fresh as a rosebud after the dew, darling," he said, with a tender look of admiration at Guenn's pink cheeks. "You are a

splendid traveller. When we are married we shall go all around the world. I have so many pet places I want to show my darling. The crater of Mauna-Loa in Hawaii, the view from the American College at Beirut under Mount Lebanon, the sunset glow over the Sphinx, the big trees in California, and the palms at Damascus. With me as a guide you shall see the whole world."

Guenn looked wonderfully happy, as she leaned on his arm, oblivious of an old officer, just from Calcutta; who had long ceased to have any liver, owing to endless "pegging" in a hot climate at all hours of the day, while political resident at the court of the Nawab of Mhurgad; and who growled to himself as he stumped away: "Humph, another pair of fools. I've no patience with 'em—hope I'll get a curry for tiffin."

"Anywhere will be Eden with you, dearest," she whispered, "and do you know Ancona always reminds me of that poem of Mrs. Browning's :

' Dead, both my boys !
One of them killed in the East by the sea,
One of them killed by the sea in the West.'

That brings in Ancona, you know, and I think it is one of the loveliest (if least known) poems in our language. There's the whistle. We must hurry."

When they reached the carriage, which a tip to the attentive guard had reserved exclusively for them, they found Venetia and Miss Preston comfortably settled, and engaged in emptying, with remarkable celerity a tempting basket of juicy green figs. They soon settled themselves for the day, Guenn going into a confidential comparison of her list for the trousseau with Miss Preston's memory of her mother's on a similar occasion, years ago ; while Charlecote retired to a neighboring carriage where the sign *e vietare fumare* did not offend his smoke-loving eyes. Venetia was deeply interested in the landscape, as they sped from the south of Italy to the north, and became enchanted with the scenery as they neared the Mount Cenis tunnel. They stopped for half an hour at Chiasso, and then entered the tunnel, in whose gloomy depths Guenn was very nervous, and not reassured until she found herself in the warm sun-

light on the other side of the mountain range.

The rest of the day passed very pleasantly in reading, chatting and long confidential talks with Charlecote, until about five o'clock when they reached Paris, thankful that so much of the long journey was over. They had decided not to stop there but to push on at once to England, where Lady Dacre, Guenn's "Cousin Mabel," would be awaiting them ; so, having secured a family omnibus for themselves and their luggage, they rumbled across the noisy city, to the Gare-du-Nord, where they arrived an hour before the departure of their train. They were all rather hungry, and an eager request from Guenn to go over the way and have their dinner at one of the little outside tables in the warm air, met with little resistance, although Miss Preston was rather uncertain as to Mrs. Grundy's approval.

"Won't it look rather disreputable, my dear, as if we were going to drink absinthe or something dissipated ?" A shout of laughter greeted her, and Charlecote explained that it was a perfectly proper proceeding, after which Miss Pres-

ton made no further objection, and they sat down at one of the little round metal tables. The inevitable "bifteck" made its appearance, flanked by the equally inevitable Medoc. After, they strolled over to the station and settled themselves comfortably in a coupé-salon, for Charlecote travelled comfortably—luxuriously sometimes—as he had an unpleasant remembrance of the time when he had been trotted over Europe in second-class carriages by that American anomaly, a private tutor. His particular affliction had belonged to the school of Howells and James—not the London drapers, but their American prototypes, the "laureates of under-clothing"—and Charlecote, in gratitude at his happy deliverance, always gave the porters double tips, and travelled first-class. When he was on this subject he was inexhaustible.

"The whole race of private tutors is a mistake," he would say. "No man ever became one yet from a genuine desire to benefit his fellow creatures. Men who have that desire become missionaries. A private tutor (of course there are exceptions—I had one once, Westminster

his name was—who was a treasure, a great handsome chap, and the soul of geniality) is a broken-down affair generally. Wouldn't the world have more respect for a man who was poor, and stout and strong, if he broke stones on the public roads; than if he became bear leader to some young cub and ate the bread of dependence? The whole race is a race of toadies and tuft hunters. My least pleasant experience in this line was my last tutor. He was a light-hearted, rather light-headed, young man, with watery blue eyes that were opening and shutting constantly in a distressing manner, and with a thin straggling moustache. He laboured under the impression that he could write books, and fondly believed himself to be a second Hawthorne. He was a man of unexcelled conceit, and under his name on the title page of his first book kindly added a biographical sketch of his life and the positions he had filled. He was a dreamy chap, but firmly thought himself a man of business, and was once full of a plan to make his fortune by bottling red champagne on the Riviera."

“He believed that he inspired terror in the minds of all who saw him, and would fiercely point his moustache as he incidentally threatened to kick, maim or kill someone who had offended him. Like all blusterers he was an arrant coward. I remember when I lived with him in a villa paid for by my own money, how grandiloquently he would speak of “my villa,” “my servants,” *et hoc genus omne*. A faithful old English nurse who was once, much to her regret, in his employ, but who came into my family later, summed up the situation pointedly as follows :

“‘It’s easy to see, Sir, that Mr.— never had a house of his own or he would not be forever talking of this one.’”

“He was up to most nasty dodges, but once or twice managed to run his head against a stone wall.”

“And yet in his way I rather liked the man, he was so amusing in his egotism. I believe he might have done something worth doing if he could only have unravelled the tangle of conceit in which he was caught. I wasted two years with him—and so, R. I. P.”

When Charlecote had finished his diatribe, they were well on their way to Calais, having passed Amiens without a stop. Luckily they found the "Empress" at Calais, instead of one of the miserably small tubs usually put on at night by the London, Chatham and Dover Company, and as the channel was fairly smooth, they quite enjoyed the passage, which lasted only sixty-five minutes. Indeed they were well enough to take some sandwiches and pale ale on the boat, as it was then about midnight, and they had had nothing since their café dinner at Paris.

Miss Preston comfortably went to sleep in a deck cabin, and Venetia meditated in a long chair, while Guenn and her lover walked up and down in the moonlight, Guenn looking very sweet in her travelling dress of tailor-built Scotch tweed made loose and full, as she leaned against Charlecote, who was picturesquely unconventional in his deerstalker and long ulster.

"I'm so glad we are near England again, dear," she said as they stopped a minute at the rail to peer through the blackness and look for the white

chalk cliffs of Dover. "The gloom that has seemed to hang over me is gone, and I am nearly happy again. If I could only see that mirror broken, I should be happy ! Why? Because it worries me to think of it. The Quartanos, in whose family it was, were held to be "weirds" in the days of the Turkish dominion in Corfu, and one of them was burned for witchcraft. Oh, I know it is foolish to believe in such things, Fergus, and I don't; but still I would like to see that glass broken ! If Cousin Mabel likes to take it, however, she can have it. But here we are !" The steamer was entering Dover bay, as the arc of brilliant lights in front showed, and Charlecote had hardly time to collect his party and their belongings, before a crowd was pouring through the gangway and a gruff English voice was saying : " Tickets please. Hold on there. *Tickets.*" A few minutes saw them seated in the London train, and about six in the morning, dusty and tired and hungry their train rolled into Victoria station.

VI.

THE VISIT TO HURSTBOURNE.

When Heracles was sent by King Eurystheus to accomplish his twelve great labours, he undoubtedly found the second the most trying ; for the fight he waged with the Hydra of Lerna was a deadly one, and we can imagine with what satisfaction he dipped his arrows in its poisonous blood when it lay dead before him. All through his life those arrows were a god-send to him, for they protected him from many dangers. "And I wonder what became of them," said Guenn to herself, some weeks after their arrival in England, as she sat in the twilight in their cosy little sitting-room at the Langham; for all the others were out, preparing for their visit to Lady Dacre in the country the next day ; and Guenn was left alone to doze over the last theosophical novel. Somehow she found herself thinking of the hero, and wondering where his arrows were. "They are finding such extraordinary things nowadays that I don't see why the

arrows of Heracles should escape. Dr. Schleimann discovered Troy, and they actually have a mummy of the Bible Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea ; " she said to herself—"I don't see why these arrows should't be about somewhere ! And those rocks the peasants call the ' Arrows of Heracles ' in Corfu ! I shall look there when we go back. Of course I don't expect to find the arrows, but still—oh, there you are," as the door opened and Venetia, Charlecote and Miss Preston came in, laden with packages. "I know you're dying for some tea. Come and have some, and show me your purchases." Fergus Charlecote came up to her smiling and tossed a small box, neatly done up in white paper and blue ribbons, down on the sofa beside her. "There *chérie*, is something to wear at Hurstbourne at that county ball your Cousin Mabel has been worrying you about, I think you will find it worthy of your Worth gown."

Guenn eagerly unfastened the paper, and opened the pretty white satin box, making a *moue* at her lover for his awful pun. Then she gave a cry of delighted surprise, for she found

something she had been wanting a long time : a large dark-blue turquoise, without a flaw, set in a ring and surrounded by brilliants. "Oh, Fergus, how lovely ! How can I thank you ? Do you know this makes the fifth ring you have given me since our engagement ? You really must not get any more."

"Let me see it, Guenn, dear," said Miss Preston : "it is lovely. Such turquoises are rarely found, and you must take care of it. Did I tell you that Lady Dacre had written thanking you in the most glowing terms for that mirror ? She calls it a 'mediaeval gem' and says you couldn't have found anything she liked better."

Guenn started and said : "Oh, you have sent her the mirror. I almost wish you had waited until after our visit ; but it does not matter. Come, Venetia, we must dress for dinner."

After the girls had left the room Miss Preston and Charlecote had a long talk, ending up with this comforting assurance on the lady's part : "I think she quite got over that morbid feeling, Fergus, and I must say I am glad the mirror is away from her sight. Her mind is full of a plan

she has for opening up some old tombs on the estate at Corfu, where she thinks the ashes or the arrows of Heracles were buried. For my own part I fancy they are heaps of rubbish ; but since it pleases her to think otherwise I don't say anything. When you're married, Fergus, you'll find the child is never happy without some hobby to fill her mind. You'll be good to her, my boy ?" And the handsome old lady went up to him with a very pleading look.

"Good to her ! I should like to see the man who could be anything else," and he laughed as he hurried away to put on his evening clothes.

They had a cosy little dinner in the coffee-room ; and then went to see the latest Gaiety Burlesque, which Guenn, who had often heard of Lonnen and Florence St. John, thoroughly enjoyed, showing particular enthusiasm over Letty Lind's wonderful dancing. But it was sad to Fergus to miss Fred Leslie's matchless form and to think of him as dead.

"I've had a good time, dear," she said to Venetia that night at bedtime, "and I shall enjoy the visit to Hurstbourne, I know, for I've such

heaps of new clothes to wear." And then she went to sleep.

They were all up early next morning, for their train went at nine o'clock, and accordingly a quarter before the hour saw them assembled on the platform at Paddington, with a larger supply of trunks and boxes than they had brought with them from Greece. But the girls had seen their deficiencies in the matter of clothes as soon as they had taken their first walk in Regent street, and had not delayed long in getting as much of a stock from Mme. Elise as that fashionable dressmaker could supply in the three weeks they had been at the Langham.

Both Guenn and Venetia had looked as sweet and attractive on that May morning in Corfu when we first saw them unpacking the old mirror, but now they bore the unmistakable stamp of a *fin-de-siecle* London dressmaker, and both of them certainly looked more distinguished. Charlecote was taking his valet down with him, and his man, with the maids of the ladies, made quite a party by themselves. Even old Miss Preston had caught the infection, and was at-

tired in something approaching the fashions of the beginning of this century.

They spent the morning pleasantly in the train, having secured a first-class carriage to themselves by means of the inevitable half-crown tip to the guard, and were almost sorry to reach Upton-Royal, the nearest station to Hurstbourne, about two in the afternoon. They found a brougham for the ladies and a high dog cart for Charlecote, with a spring cart for the luggage, and then drove slowly through the green and sweet-smelling lanes, all alight with may and primroses. Soon they turned into the park through the large lodge gates, bearing on each a lion rampant, the crest of the Dacres. Here they stopped a moment by Venetia's wish, to admire the velvety, grassy slopes of the park, and wonder at the immense oaks growing in clumps, while in the distance a few startled deer peeped from the ferns and bracken. The house was two miles from the lodge (a pretty vine-covered stone cottage, with rosy children about the doors) and the whole prospect was enchanting. One spot, in particular, Guenn fell wildly in love with—where

the road dived under overhanging pines, whose branches were matted so closely together that there was always a soft twilight under the shade. The road itself was carpeted with the softest pine needles, and on each side rare ferns grew in wild luxuriance. After this they drove on rapidly over the hard smooth roads, and soon had their first view of Hurstbourne, as they reached the top of a long hill. The house was a queer rambling old place, added to at different times and by different architects. It was built of greystone and ran up for three floors ending in a cupola or tower.

The middle part was the oldest, and was uncompromisingly ugly, but the two sides, one of which joined it closely, consisted of four large rooms, one above the other, each of unusual size; for the master of Hurstbourne loved plenty of space, and the people who loved him said his house was almost as large as his heart. He had died some years before, and his widow, Lady Dacre, now lived alone at Hurstbourne, which was hers for life.

She stood in the doorway as they drove under

the ivy - hung porte-cochère, and held out her hands with a glad "Welcome my dear people, welcome to Hurstbourne. Why, Venetia, how you have changed ! And Guenn, dear, I should never have known you. And Margaret, I am glad to see you again ; while Fergus knows he has always a welcome here." The speaker was a tall, upright lady, of middle age, with still fair hair, on the shining locks of which rested a dainty cap of lace and muslin, a gossamer creation that looked as unsubstantial as a spider's web. She had a sweet face, still saddened by the death of her greatly loved husband, but with a resigned expression that made her appear like one of Raphael's Madonnas, grown old in quiet worship of the Lord whom she had brought into the world.

Everyone loved her, and Guenn was to prove no exception to the rule, for after one enquiring look she lifted her face to kiss her with "Cousin Mabel, I shall love you. You are like my mother."

Then the usual bustle of an arrival took place, and all of the guests were lost in wonder and admiration at the delights of Hurstbourne. The

entrance hall was a noble one, with a stone floor, and hung with stags heads, and various trophies of arms collected by Lord Dacre in his wanderings in South Africa and India. The family armour and the large collection of old English weapons that had come down to him from his ancestors, he had banished to the picture gallery, up-stairs. After a little desultory chat Lady Dacre said: "Will you have some tea, first, or go to your room?"

"Oh, a cup of tea, by all means, said Miss Preston, "I am half famished."

The girls joined in and accordingly tea was served in the morning room, as the pretty alcove, done in pink and pale-blue, was called. They were all ready for it, and Charlecote covered himself with glory by the innumerable cups he consumed. They lingered long in the cosy firelit room, and were loth to leave it, for Lady Dacre was a clever talker and entertained them with various little bon-mots relating to the county families near.

"There is a queer family next us, who have bought Beckwith Priory, that large estate which

belonged to the Dugges—*nouveaux riches*, I fancy. The husband has just been raised to the peerage as Viscount Ritter of Upton, and his wife never lets us forget that he is now 'My Lord.' They say his father used to keep a tripe shop ! It always reminds me of that clever old story (you know it of course) about the country Clergyman who was suddenly made a Bishop by Mr. Gladstone, for some unknown reason. He was a quiet man enough, but his wife was a pushing sort of person, and when she found that English Bishops were addressed as 'My Lord' she was delighted, and impressed it carefully on all her servants when they settled in the 'Palace' of the Diocese. Among these was a small page boy whose duty it was to wake the Bishop every morning. When he knocked he had strict instructions to say always in reply to his Lordship's question, 'The boy, my Lord.' But the first morning he was so flurried that when the Bishop called out 'Who's there' he replied hastily, 'The Lord, my boy ! ' " And with a hearty laugh at Lady Dacre's story, the party broke up to dress for the eight o'clock dinner. Charlecote's quarters were off

in the bachelor's wing, where he was to be alone until the expected detachment of guests for the County Ball should put in an appearance. Plenty of sporting novels, and several big easy chairs, gave the room a comfortable look, and a silver collarette, holding many different bottles of liqueurs, and several plates of biscuits and boxes of Havannas, promised refreshment for the inner man. Having rung for his man, and told him to unpack his portmanteaux, he threw himself into one of the huge easy chairs and fell into a deep reverie.

Meanwhile Lady Dacre was showing Guenn and the others to their rooms. Miss Preston, of course, had the best of these, a large chamber done in blue. When they had reached this, Lady Dacre said to Guenn, upon whose arm she was leaning: "There is your room over the way, and Venetia's opens into it. Hers is done in grey and silver and yours in pale pink. I'm going to have a chat with your Aunt, so you must excuse me. Don't hurry—take your own time about dressing for dinner," and with a smile, the old lady beckoned them away.

"I must thank you again for sending me that lovely old mirror, Margaret," said Lady Dacre. "I think——" but just then she caught sight of Miss Preston's face which had clouded at the mention of the mirror, and she stopped to enquire the reason.

The girls, meanwhile, had gone first into Venetia's room and were busy admiring it. A bright fire glowed in the tiled fireplace, and dainty knick-knacks, with the last new books from Mudie's, lay around.

Guenn chatted awhile with her cousin as she removed her wraps, and then suddenly opened the door into her own room and stood for a moment admiring it. Everything was in a pale French pink, the walls were hung with dainty hangings of pink surah, the velvet carpet showed a pattern of pink rosebuds on a white ground, and the valence and curtains of the bed were pink. It was a lovely room, for a warm glow seemed to light it up. The sofas and easy chairs were upholstered in soft, loose pink, and the dressing-table draped with pink and white silk, as was also the chimney-piece. A few water-col-

ours from famous brushes were on the walls, and small stands of bric-a-brac were scattered all about. A low pile of cushions were drawn up to the fire, and near at hand a small Chinese table tempted one with various small silver trays containing all sorts of bon-bons and *fruit-confit*. A few vases filled with fresh rosebuds—only pink ones—stood about on the stands and tables. Guenn was delighted and called to Venetia, and they stood together in the doorway, arm-in-arm. “How lovely, Venetia! I think Cousin Mabel is—” the words froze on her lips, and her cousin looking up saw she was deadly pale. Her eyes were fixed upon the dressing-table, and Venetia hastily following her glance, saw, draped with white and pink silk to match the room, and with the weird motto shining clear on its front—the old mirror. Guenn shuddered, then seemed to come to herself. “It is fate, Venetia, I left Corfu to escape that thing, and I find it here. Pshaw! I will shake off this fear,” and walking with a firm step to the dressing-table, Guenn looked long and earnestly into the polished glass.

VII.

“CAVE SAGITTUM.”

Guenn seemed to have overcome her old haunting dread of the mirror, and laughingly observed to Lady Dacre that evening at dinner :

“I had no idea you would prize that old glass so, Cousin Mabel, it was certainly a surprise to see it on my table-de-toilette.”

The old lady replied with a nervous smile and an “Oh, my dear, if it troubles you in the least, pray have it removed. I will tell James to have it replaced by a more modern mirror. It is too narrow to see oneself properly in.”

But Guenn remonstrated to the surprise of all : “Please let it stay there, Cousin Mabel. I am ashamed of my silly fears about it, and mean to overcome them.”

A bright smile from Fergus rewarded her for this speech, and he would have spoken, but for a story Lady Dacre was beginning, and which, like all her stories, was sure to be witty. “Yes, it happened only last Sunday. My niece Doris

was stopping with me at the time. She had been teaching in the Sunday-school and the chairman had asked her to take a class of sixteen boys—she had been teaching small girls before. She consented with some reluctance, and last Sunday morning she tried them for the first time. For a while they were quiet, but soon began to fidget about, one lad in particular making himself unpleasant, a son of our agent, Roy. Doris (who is very pretty and only seventeen) tried in vain to awe this youth into good behaviour, and at last in desperation cried : ' Roy, do you wish me to hold your hands ? ' The young scamp looked at her demurely for a moment and then said : ' You can if you want to, I shouldn't mind.' I need hardly say Doris went back to her class of small girls ! "

Under cover of this laugh, Charlecote, who sat next to Guenn, managed to press her hand, while Lady Dacre went on : " You will see Doris at the ball. She it was who persuaded and coaxed me into entertaining the county and giving a ball, when I haven't done such a thing for years. It is next Monday evening, you know

my dears. Margaret tells me your gowns are marvels, even where Worth's creation are in question. I shall send up to London for my grandmother's point lace—lace that she valued at thousands of pounds. It has been in Coutt's bank untouched since my marriage, and I shall be glad to see it again. The Lord-Lieutenant of the County, the Earl of Charleville, is coming, and will bring a brilliant house-party with him. I shall want you two girls to help me with some extra cards of invitation in the morning. Meanwhile as we have about finished we might have a little music in the morning-room, unless Fergus wants to sit longer over his wine?"

Fergus laughingly declined, and they all went to the pretty morning-room, where an Erard grand piano stood invitingly open. After some urging Guenn seated herself before it and sang with great taste and expression the shadow-song from *Dinorah*, and then the *Si je t'aime* from *Carmen*. Charlecote stood by the piano to turn her music and they made an ideally handsome pair. Guenn was in a clinging white Empire gown, and wore a string of pearls twisted in her

hair. During a pause in the music she turned to Charlecote with laughing eyes and said : "This reminds me of a droll incident that happened to a German schoolmate of mine. She was at the same school, and as the head mistress was an old friend of the Duchess of Stowe, she and the Duke always came down on 'Founder's Day,' to give away the prizes and make pleasant little speeches generally. The Duke was a very gallant old man and always insisted on turning the music for the girls who played, a proceeding that put them out awfully, for he pottered so over it—but then you could hardly tell a Duke to hurry. This German friend of mine was playing one of Beethoven's Sonatas, the 'Kreutzer' I think, and His Grace stepped up as usual—Gretchen didn't speak English well, of course—and, as usual, lost his place and fumbled about with his eye-glass trying to find it. Gretchen at last could stand it no longer, and almost crying, shouted out : 'Turn me over, Herr Duke, turn me over, quick.' The Duke nearly had a fit, for the people laughed for half an hour; and he never attended the 'Founder's Day' celebration again."

Charlecote bent down and tenderly whispered : " If the Duke's head were as much turned as mine "—but to this silly speech Guenn very properly vouchsafed no reply, and beckoned Venetia to come and take her place at the piano, while she and Fergus strolled into the long dimly lit drawing room. This was to be their last night alone, for the next day Lord Charleville and his party were expected. They talked of many things as they walked, arm-in-arm, while Venetia's clear high notes came to them as she sang " Robin Adair," for she excelled in the old ballads, and Lady Dacre liked them better than all others. They broke up early, and as they marched upstairs each one with his flat old-fashioned candlestick, Guenn called to Charlecote who was en route for the smoking room : " We meet again at Phillipi. Good night." He smoked several Victorias before he sought his couch, and pleasant visions of his future life, of wanderings in company with his loved one passed through his head. And was it fate that made him say to himself just before stepping into bed : " And, by Jove, we'll have a shy at those tombs,

Guenn is always talking of, at Corfu. It would be a lark to find Hercules' arrows, if the old boy ever buried 'em anywhere, or ever had any to bury." With which profound speculation he turned over and went to sleep. The next morning a large party arrived, and Guenn, upon going into the breakfast room, saw many new faces, but Lady Dacre made room for her by her side, under the protecting wing of the huge Russian samovar that hissed and bubbled away for dear life.

"No, thank you, no toast; I'll take a little kippered herring or some devilled kidney, thank you, Lord Caithness," she said, as several men sprang up to wait on her. For it is one of the great charms of English county house life that servants are banished from the breakfast room, and the men in the house wait upon the ladies, whereby the conversation is really brilliant and gossipy, away from the watchful eyes of James-Henry. The day passed gaily away in driving, riding and billiards, and a merry party gathered in the smoking-room that evening after bidding the ladies good night; the men emerging from

their different rooms in various picturesque and unconventional smoking jackets and caps. Towards the small hours bursts of laughter grew more constant, and finally a story from the jolly old Earl of Caithness brought the proceedings to a merry close.

The next day was devoted to a picnic to the ruins of Thorncliff Grange—an old moated house about ten miles away—said to be haunted by the ghost of an unfortunate servant who some two hundred years before had committed suicide in the dining-room, because the master's son, with whom she was in love, had married some one else. However, exhaustive search failed to discover any trace of inhabitants, ghostly or otherwise, in the ruins, and after a merry al-fresco meal the party returned home. After that the days passed quickly until the night of the ball arrived. The ladies were down early and assembled for a final and fortifying cup of tea in Lady Dacre's boudoir about nine o'clock; the ball commencing at ten. The gowns of all the ladies were magnificent, but the ones most deserving of attention were those

of our friends. Venetia's ball dress was a marvel, and everyone said Worth had surpassed himself ; she wore a pearl-white brocaded satin with pearl-embroidered front, and the corsage trimmed with pearls. But Guenn's gown was the success of the evening ; and her radiant dazzling beauty shone from its appropriate setting with dainty brightness, while her slender figure seemed almost too ethereal for this planet. Her dress was a pale shade of apricot pink veiled in chiffons, and caught up with bouquets of dark sweet-smelling Parma violets. To match these she wore the wonderful Charlecote sapphires which Fergus had given her the day before, and carried a dark-blue fan—a rare treasure painted by Greuze, and worth many hundreds of pounds on account of the two dainty children his master hand had limned upon it.

Lady Dacre was dignity personified in crimson velvet and the famous point-lace which was the envy of every other dowager in the room. Miss Preston wore her mother's diamonds and a vieux-rose brocade, that could (and did) stand by itself.

"Quite prepared for conquest, dear?" whispered Lady Dorothy Cushing to Guenn as she fastened her bracelet. "Look at that awful old party over there," she went on, in a slightly louder tone, as she sipped a cup of fragrant Orange Pekoe with much satisfaction, pointing to an elderly lady of ample proportions who was strikingly arrayed in a bright yellow silk with a coronet and necklace of large topazes. "She looks like a washerwoman." She was slightly disconcerted when a tall, thin young lady next to her turned and said with a vinegar smile: "That is my mother, Lady Dorothy. I can ask her if she will take in your washing, if you wish it."

Slightly after ten the guests began to arrive, and the ladies, who all received together at the entrance of the grand drawing-room, had their hands full. Guenn chafed at this after a while, and as the first few bars of "See me dance the Polka," were played by the band, glanced appealingly at Charlecote, who was chatting with the Member for the Borough, a stout pompous little man who patronized everyone. He caught her glance, and soon they were whirling rapidly

to the inspiring music, while they lost all count of time. Guenn, breathless and radiant from the merry dance, rushed into the conservatory later in the evening to pin up a rent, and there Fergus found her after a long chase.

“Just a minute, Fergus, my partners are searching the house for me,” she laughed, with her mouth full of pins.

“Oh, darling, don’t go yet, I haven’t seen you all the evening. What lovely arms and hands you have. What are you laughing at?”—in a disgusted tone; for Guenn had buried her face in her handkerchief and was shaking with laughter, if a young lady in a Worth gown ever can be said to shake with anything.

“Oh, Fergus, your remark reminded me of Aunt Margaret’s friend. You know she had lovely arms, and once at a ball, an officer who was dancing with her, and who was not up in classic-al history, said: ‘Ah, Miss Leclerc, your arms and hands are like those of the Venus of Milo’s!’ But the best of the joke was that she was in the same box, and thinking he had paid her a great compliment said: ‘Oh, you flatterer!’ She mar-

ried him afterwards I believe, and I only hope they spent their honeymoon in Paris, and went to the Louvre Gallery."

Just then the Earl of Caithness rushed up with a terribly hot and red face, owing both to his naturally shy nature and to his tight yeomanry uniform, and gasped out: "My dance, I b'leeve, Miss Guenn," as he carried her off in triumph.

The ball went on until four o'clock, and the Cotillon was a great success, for Charlecote led it with Lady Dorothy Cushing, the daughter of the Lord Lieutenant, and many new figures were introduced. The favours were very original, and everyone was delighted.

After the last carriage had rolled away, the girls lingered long together in Venetia's room talking over the evening, and finally as the clock struck five Guenn gathered up her things, and with a laughing "good night," ran into her room and up to the dressing-table.

Throwing down her fan, dance-card and gloves, she rang the bell for her maid, and then leaning her arms on the dressing-table, rested her face between her hands and gazed steadily

at her reflection in the old mirror, of which she had long since ceased to be afraid. "I am not so bad looking, after all," she murmured, but just then a light scuffle occurred at the door, and her maid ran in breathless. "You are late, Susanne, I—" she stopped short as she turned to the glass again, and rubbed her eyes. A minute since it had been as clear as her own soul, now, to her horrified eyes, appeared two words written on the mirror in a clear, legible hand, and with the ink as dry as if they had been there for years. She read the writing again: "Cave Sagittum," appeared clearly on the glass, too clearly to admit of any doubt, and after a moment of agonizing wonder, with one wild scream she fainted away. So they found her later, when they all rushed in; and Charlecote, who had entered first, threw a scarf over the glass as his eyes caught the writing, not wishing anyone else to see. For several days Guenn was threatened with brain fever, but her strong constitution carried her through the peril safely; and after some days of terrible anxiety during which she was in wild delirium, and babbling of clear streams and green fields; reason

gradually came back to her ; and although very pale and weak, she was herself once more; and the doctor ordered her back to Greece at once.

VIII.

SHADOWS.

A beautiful bright morning in Corfu, six weeks later, found Guenn in a huge reclining chair on the upper balcony of Mon-Repos, with Charlecote standing at her side, and looking anxiously down at her. Ever since the night at Hurstbourne, when she had seen the fatal writing in the mirror, she had remained in a condition of settled melancholy, most painful to witness, and she insisted that the words were meant as a warning to prepare for death. Nothing could shake this belief, and now the efforts of her friends were directed to the difficult task of interesting her in other things. After a few gloomy days at Hurstbourne they had come back to Corfu by the doctor's advice. Lady Dacre had insisted upon coming with them—for

she considered Guenn's unfortunate condition due to her. The strangest part of the whole affair was the fact that the mysterious writing remained on the glass, and could not be removed.

Guenn, after her interest in the house had somewhat died out, seemed to have a passion for long walks ; and Charlecote was delighted to act as escort. These walks and her interest in the tombs were the only things that kept the poor girl from becoming melancholy mad, and Fergus often looked back on them with a pleasure that was half a pain.

They were out soon after breakfast one lovely morning, and as they strolled along they kept silence for some time, gazing at the sea ; until Guenn woke up to some sort of life at the sight of a peasant girl with several pretty baskets of ripe mulberries, a fruit of which she was particularly fond. "Oh, Fergus, do get me some. I haven't tasted any since we came back." Charlecote was only too glad to see her interested, and after they had moved on again, said :

"Guenn, dearest, try to shake off this terrible dread. I thoroughly believe that writing on the

mirror due to natural causes, and had nothing to do with the supernatural. Either it had always been there, and was brought to light only by the polishing the glass had lately received, or it was a silly practical joke played by one of the guests. Do try to get the idea out of your head that it was meant as a warning. It is ruining your health. For my sake forget it." And his tone was very pleading as he spoke.

Guenn was pressing a ripe mulberry to her lips, and laughed a little bitterly as she replied : "I would shake it off, Fergus, but I can't. How could any practical joker have caused the writing to appear on the mirror during that half-second my back was turned? And as to its having been there always, I know it wasn't, for Venetia and I polished the glass for hours when we first found it, and there was nothing there ; but I want to sit down under this old olive and rest, for I'm very tired."

They placed the basket of ripe, juicy mulberries on a rock conveniently near, and sat in contented silence until Guenn said : "This lovely view makes me want to write a poem."

“ Like that chap I knew at Oxford—Lal Sinnett—who was always scribbling the most awful rubbish you can imagine. A friend of his played him an awfully good trick one day, for Sinnett was very keen on what he called philosophical verse, and so one morning after a sleepless night he rushed to his blotter and scribbled down the first two lines of a poem that was to make him immortal. He was going on with it, but had to hurry off to a lecture, and left his blotter open. His friend came in, saw the unfinished verse and completed it, then hastily decamped. Sinnett wrote :

‘ The sun’s perpendicular rays
Illumined the depths of the sea. ’

And his friend finished it :

‘ The fishes beginning to sweat,
Cried “ hang it, how hot we shall be ! ” ’

This amused Guenn immensely, and seemed to distract her thoughts from the terrible writing on the mirror. “ All boys pass through that craze—and most girls; but while the prose of the boy’s poem is funny, that of the girl’s is pitiful,

for it always suggests a pinched-in waist and a diet of slate pencils."

"You are rather severe, Guenn. I have known girls to write short poems exquisite in their pathos and simplicity. My sister Ada who died just as she reached womanhood, when her brilliant genius was expanding and promising future work that would astonish the world, wrote one short poem, two lines of which I have always remembered; it was a girl's farewell to her mother:

'And then we shall meet in Heaven,
And walk by the great white sea.'

"It is a strange old saying: 'Those whom the gods love, die young,' and I believe it. For all the men and women of great genius have died young: Alexander, Byron, Keats, Kirke White, Edward the VI., the King of Rome—Napoleon's son—Charlotte Brontë and the Prince Imperial, these are only a few names taken at random, and they were all men and women of great power. One wonders what the world would have been if they had all lived and carried out the promise of their youth."

The next day was stormy, and the wind blew in great gusts, while the waves sent their spray flying far over the rocky souvenirs of the Ithacan. The party had arranged for a sail, but reluctantly gave it up. Guenn, however, insisted upon going out in the teeth of the strong wind, despite the protests of Miss Preston and Venetia, to whose entreaties Lady Dacre in vain added her persuasions.

"Fergus will take me," Guenn said, twisting a white Shetland wrap around her head and throwing a scarlet Algerian burnous about her. "I think the wind will do my headache good." Charlecote did not try to dissuade her, for he felt that anything capable of distracting her thoughts was valuable, so he followed her slowly down to the little sandy cove under the One-Gun-Battery, where Guenn's small boat was kept. They hastily hoisted the sail and shoved off, Guenn keeping the tiller, and Charlecote holding the sail cord. Everything was quiet enough near shore, but the minute they rounded the high rocks at the entrance, the storm caught them and drove the boat with frightful quick-

ness through the water. Charlecote—although he was anxious—enjoyed it, and Guenn forgot all her troubles in the excitement of watching the huge white-crested waves rush after the boat astern as though to devour her. The wind died down after a while and they were able to talk. Charlecote fancied Guenn's pallor due to internal qualms, and asked her if she felt seasick, but she laughed brightly and said: "I never hear the French speak of sea-sickness without thinking of the splendid joke in *Punch*. You remember it? That young American girl just landed at Havre, who said to the inspector at the douane: '*Nous avons trois grands malles et une petite malle-de-mer.*' Her accent and grammar were equally bad." But then a startling event occurred. The sail flew about with lightning quickness, knocking Charlecote into the bottom of the boat, and the little vessel heeled over dangerously close to the water for a few seconds, so close that big waves poured in, and Guenn's face took on an additional gray tinge. The suspense lasted for several minutes, and then they thought that all was over, for a bigger wave than

usual came foaming towards them, its great green crest curling up in a terribly threatening way. Guenn sprang up with one hand holding the tiller, her hair blowing wildly in the breeze. The wave came on, and Charlecote shut his eyes, but a clever turn of the tiller saved them and the wave rushed by behind them.

“Sailing here reminds me of Byron’s song :

‘ The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece
Where burning Sappho lived and sang.’

said Guenn, as she sat panting while the boat floated slowly to shore. “Of course you know Sappho’s poems, Fergus, I wish you would get me a good translation. I would give a great deal to read them in the original, but I haven’t been to Girton. Order me a copy from your London bookseller.” Fergus promised, and they sat for a few moments in the boat, now floating quietly in the little rocky basin, where the water was as clear as crystal, while outside the waves dashed against the “Ships of Ulysses” in mountainous masses.

“And so next week we are to leave Corfu again,” said Guenn, as she lay back in her seat

tired with her recent exertions, dabbling with her hands in the water. "I am very tired, Fergus, it seems to me I need rest. Must we go?"

Charlecote's cheery tone as he replied, "Well, darling, all our arrangements are made, but if you prefer to spend our honeymoon here—" aroused Guenn to more cheerful thoughts, and she laughed: "Oh, I had actually forgotten our marriage day. Fancy."

Then they went ashore, just below the house, and stood for a time looking out to sea, and admiring the yellow-rose hue of the sky.

"How lovely, Fergus! It reminds one of the way in which the mandarin was discovered. You know how the enterprising gardener grafted a rose bush on an orange tree, and so produced the pretty fruit. The only time I can rest content, Fergus," she went on as they walked up the steep, natural stairs just opposite the "Ships of Ulysses," "is when I think of what I may discover in the tombs. I know if it were not for that I should go crazy."

"Nonsense, Guennie dear, you are simply out of sorts—a morbid germ probably causes all the

mischief ;" said her lover, who had lately devoted himself to the study of microbes and bacteriology with great assiduity, in the intervals when he was not engaged in invoking curses upon the old mirror and everything connected with it. "But I hope you *will* find something; and then next Thursday, after our marriage, we can sail away contented, to explore the delights of Stamboul, and buy out the bazaars of Constantinople."

They stopped to rest for a moment at the old stone bench half way up. This was Guenn's favorite seat, under the great olive tree, whose gnarled and twisted branches gave a grateful shade. Just under the One-Gun-Battery, it commanded a good view of the rocky shore, and the mouth of the little stream where tradition says Nausicaa, the King's daughter, came to bathe, and where she and her maidens found Ulysses hiding behind a tree.

Guenn often walked here with Charlecote, and their talk strayed over the whole field of magic, ancient, and modern, for Fergus had diligently read up the whole subject, as recorded in the

ponderous tomes of Albertus-Magnus and Cagliostro, and in the works of Col. Sinnett and Madame Blavatsky on Esoteric Buddhism.

The wonderful achievements of the Indian jugglers were particularly interesting to Guenn. After reading one day she looked up and said "No sane man will attempt to deny that magic still exists in India, Fergus. Here is the sworn testimony of sixteen eye witnesses that this Indian juggler, in full view on the barracks square at Jeypore, threw a knotted rope into the air, where it remained hanging, then climbed up it hand-over-hand and vanished at the top, the rope remaining suspended in the air for some minutes, when it too disappeared. This may be often seen in India, but it is not so common as the basket trick—which I think very horrid indeed. Col. Croft, in his "Note-Book on a Flying Trip Through India," refers to his having seen it twice, and each time he says, he was utterly puzzled and non-plussed. A large basket was turned upside down on the ground, the spectators forming a ring about it; and a woman crawled underneath. Then the magician took a sharp

sword (just proving its temper by cutting off a dog's tail), and ran it through the wicker work in several places, upon which blood flowed from beneath the basket and heartrending cries were heard (Croft also says that a doctor present pronounced the blood on the sand to be human arterial blood). Then the basket was lifted up, and nothing was found under it. This whole exhibition, you must remember took place on an open square." Guenn paused a moment, for she was out of breath; while Charlecote looked admiringly at her flushed cheeks; then went on: "The Japanese conjurers are a class by themselves, too. Their tricks are wonderful. Sir Richard Burton relates many tales gathered from eye witnesses that sound problematical at least. He says one of their favorite tricks is to float in the air on a cloud crosslegged."

"I would like to go to India, Fergus—to towns in the North, and to the Hill of Jacatala where the Fakirs have their Witches' Sabbath; and to Tokio too. Ever since I've read Sir Edwin Arnold's letters from Japan, I've been in love with the country, and its queer little women. You

must take me there, Fergus, when we are married. It seems so strange to think we shall be really married next week. And yet I'm glad, I think. Fergus, would you mind very much if I were to die now and leave you? That mirror haunts me—haunts me night and day." Charlecote's only answer was to catch her in his arms, and in a wild passionate embrace express again his love. Then Guenn, whose wishes were very uncertain now, wanted to see the old tombs, and they went to the beach again.

The tombs presented an interesting sight, as they lay there under the bright June sun, partly opened. They were at the far end of the caves, and one could see distinctly the beginning of three well-cut graves in the solid rock, the sides being so carefully chiselled that they were as smooth as glass. Several men in white kilts and red fezzes were working at them, carrying the rubbish away in baskets on their brawny backs. Already many old copper coins had been found, several bearing the superscription of Pyrrhus, but these Guenn rather pooh-poohed, for she expected to find what would be of immense value

to all the world—that is, to that part of the world up in its classics—the arrows that Philoctetes had lost. Charlecote in vain tried to argue her out of this belief, fearing a disappointment for her.

“But he hid them somewhere,” she would say, “and why not here? And you cannot answer my stock argument. Why should these graves be called the ‘Arrows of Heracles’ unless for ages there has been some connection with the hero in the minds of the peasants. No, I shall find the arrows.”

And Charlecote sighed and was silent.

IX.

THE ARROWS OF HERACLES.

It was a week later, and the day before the wedding. The old house was in a great bustle, servants were running to and fro like bewildered chickens; wedding presents were arriving by the cart-load, as Charlecote ruefully expressed it, standing with hands in his pocket before a long

table spread with every conceivable gift the wit of man or the wiles of the jeweller could suggest. The kilted Albanian servants were piling huge mountains of flowers in the hall, and hanging marriage bells of fragrant orange blossoms in the drawing-rooms ; and Lady Dacre, Miss Preston and Venetia, were upstairs in the bride's room, admiring the lovely wedding dress which was trimmed with old Point Duchesse, and caught up with unexpected orange blossoms. Fergus's bridal present had been a double necklace of magnificent diamonds, composed of selected stones of the first water. It was to be only a quiet house wedding, so there was not to be much display, particularly as they were to take that evening's steamer to Constantinople via Athens.

They all wore a happy look, for Guenn, at last, had thrown off the burden of melancholy that had rested, like a pall, upon her fair girlish beauty. She was radiantly pretty, and as her quick fingers moved among the soft yellow laces of her wedding gown, who knows what maiden fancies she may have woven in with the fragrant orange buds ? A profusion of boxes stood about

the halls, and the neat and coquettish Susanne was busily engaged in putting back the trousseau, only lately unpacked and laid out for exhibition in the Greek style.

That afternoon they were to visit the tombs, for they were nearly all laid open to view, and Guenn was sure she should find something valuable. All thoughts of the mirror had vanished now, and she was intent on the rich contents of her jewel case which she had spread out on the bed, to choose what she would take and what should be left behind. Charlecote presently secured her for a walk, and after some exercise Guenn said she was tired, and they sat down under the old olive and watched the scene Guenn never tired of: the blue water gently lapping the rocks of Odysseus, a few white-winged seagulls hovering overhead, now and then making a dash upon some unfortunate fish; and the intense blue of the sea and sky, that far excelled the overpraised beauty of the Riviera. Far away in the distance lay the faint coast line of Albania, famous for its game, where adventurous Englishmen liked to land for a day's shooting—without a passport,

at the risk of their lives. Then behind them, the beautiful Isle of Corfu itself, a strange mixture of English activity and Greek *laissez aller*. The broad smooth roads and the well-built public offices, were the result of the British occupation of the Ionian Isles, when Corfu was a garrison town. But when Great Britain ceded the Ionian Isles to Greece, all business became stationary, and now a few regiments of undersized Greek recruits, in white kilts or fustanellas, drill on the broad square where the British red-coats formerly went through their evolutions.

Guenn began to speak, pleadingly, at length : "To everyone, Fergus, come sooner or later, thoughts of death. We put them away from us, but they return and intrude themselves with awful force. The thought of death itself is not so terrible—for what is death, in whatever form it comes, but a falling asleep ? We die every night of our lives, when we go to sleep. When we come to analyze the feeling, it disappears into a dread of the hereafter. And Fergus, I have come to this conclusion after much thought and reading, that a pure life is the only one worth

living. This is the only thing that can remove the fear of decay and of death, the thought that men and women who try to lead a pure life need have no dread of death, and may look forward to it as rest from labour. And oh, Fergus dear, for my sake, remember that all sins can be forgiven ; and the beauty of the Christ worship is that a fall, a failure in being good, will not condemn a man, for his faults will be forgiven him again and again if he truly repents. When I am lying in the dust, dear, remember that there is always hope. And now shall we go in ?"

The luncheon was unusually gay that day, for the table was ornamented from the superabundance of the wedding presents, and no less than seven kinds of wedding-cake graced the board. A huge *épergne* of solid silver filled the centre, a present from the King and Queen of Greece, who had known Guenn's family well in the old days, before Great Britain had resigned the Ionian Isles to Greece ; and they were eating off a dainty set of rare old Dresden china, where the cups were so thin that one had to have a care not to bite a bit of the edge off by mistake.

"I am so glad the tombs will be opened before you go, Guenn," said Lady Dacre, "you will be more contented when you have found, or have not found, any relics of the hero you prefer to call Heracles, although in my young days I was taught to refer to him as Hercules."

Guenn laughed her reply. "Oh yes, Cousin Mabel, and I shall have a marble slab put up, not exactly '*hic jacet Heracles*,' but something apropos, done in Fergus' best Latin, with a reference to the twelve labours;" and she buried her teeth in a luscious pear. Fergus smiled at her, as he said :

"I must have your picture painted, Guenn, in your wedding gown, for I have a friend—you've heard me speak of him—Sydney Morrish; he's an A. R. A., and at the top of the tree in all matters relating to portrait painting. You will find him a very jolly fellow. But he can be sarcastic, too, at times. One famous remark he made to the Duchess of Portland, who is notorious as a hunter of the latest lions for a few weeks while they are in the fashion, and then lets them drop suddenly. Well, at the Academy Morrish was exhibiting four

large pictures, and he happened to meet the Duchess in front of them. She was very gracious, and after a little chat said to him : 'One sees a frightful amount of rubbish here, Mr. Morrish; pray, who painted these—ah—monstrosities ?' waving her lorgnettes about. Morrish was equal to the occasion—said he : 'These are my four pictures that your Grace said you could live with forever, when you saw them in my studio.' " But Guenn pouted : "If he is so sharp as that, Fergus, I should be afraid of his making a bon-mot about me. Please give me some of those candied oranges. I think they are the most delightful sweets in the world. The combination of fresh juice and sweet icing is irresistible." After they had done full justice to the iced pudding, Guenn suggested a visit to the tombs, and running to get her pretty sun hat, she dragged the others down to the caves, where the men were busily working.

Guenn's quick eye soon caught sight of two queer old coins that glistened from a pile of rubbish one of the brawny bare-legged workmen had emptied from his basket. Charlecote stooped

to pick them up, and a little rubbing showed them to be more tokens issued by Pyrrhus. Guenn's eyes sparkled, and she imperiously beckoned the workmen on. One tomb alone remained uncovered at the further end, and here the workmen directed their efforts. Loose sand and gravel alone rewarded their labour for some time; but one of the Greeks, on bringing down his pick, hit it against something solid; and a minute later a rusty metal box, old with the age of centuries, covered with mould, and eaten by dry rot, lay at Guenn's feet.

They took the box out on the shining white sands, where the golden sun blazed down from a cloudless sky, and rested it under Guenn's favorite olive. They were all there; and as the last blow of the chisel broke the solid lid, all drew back to let Guenn have the pleasure of opening it. She was radiantly happy, for was it not the eve of her wedding day, and were not her hopes almost crowned with success? With an effort she lifted off the lid, and then gave a delighted little cry, for there in the old box, tied with a strip of papyrus, was a sheaf of arrows made of some

strange material, with flint heads. With a laugh of delight Guenn lifted them out, and scratched her little finger in doing so, from touching one of the points. The whole party gathered about them, admiring and wondering for some minutes, until a startled movement from Fergus called their attention to Guenn. She stood a little apart, her hands clasped in front of her white dress, fingering her blue sash ribbons, looking out to sea. But what was that strange waxy whiteness stealing over her face, and why did her eyes have that strained wild look? With a cry Charlecote sprang to her, but before he reached her she sank gently down on the white sand, and smiled faintly up in his face as she murmured brokenly :

“The arrows-of-Heracles, the writing on the-mirror. Good-by, darling,” then she pointed her finger to the golden sun, “up-there,-my-Fergus; we shall walk, by the great white-sea.” One sigh and she was gone. And the sun shone without change on the sweet girlish face so white now, on the poisoned arrows of Heracles, and on the broken-hearted lover by the strand of the blue tideless sea.

And on that day, the housemaid, who was cleaning the rooms at Hurstbourne, wondered, for the writing on the mirror had faded quite away.

[FINIS.]





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